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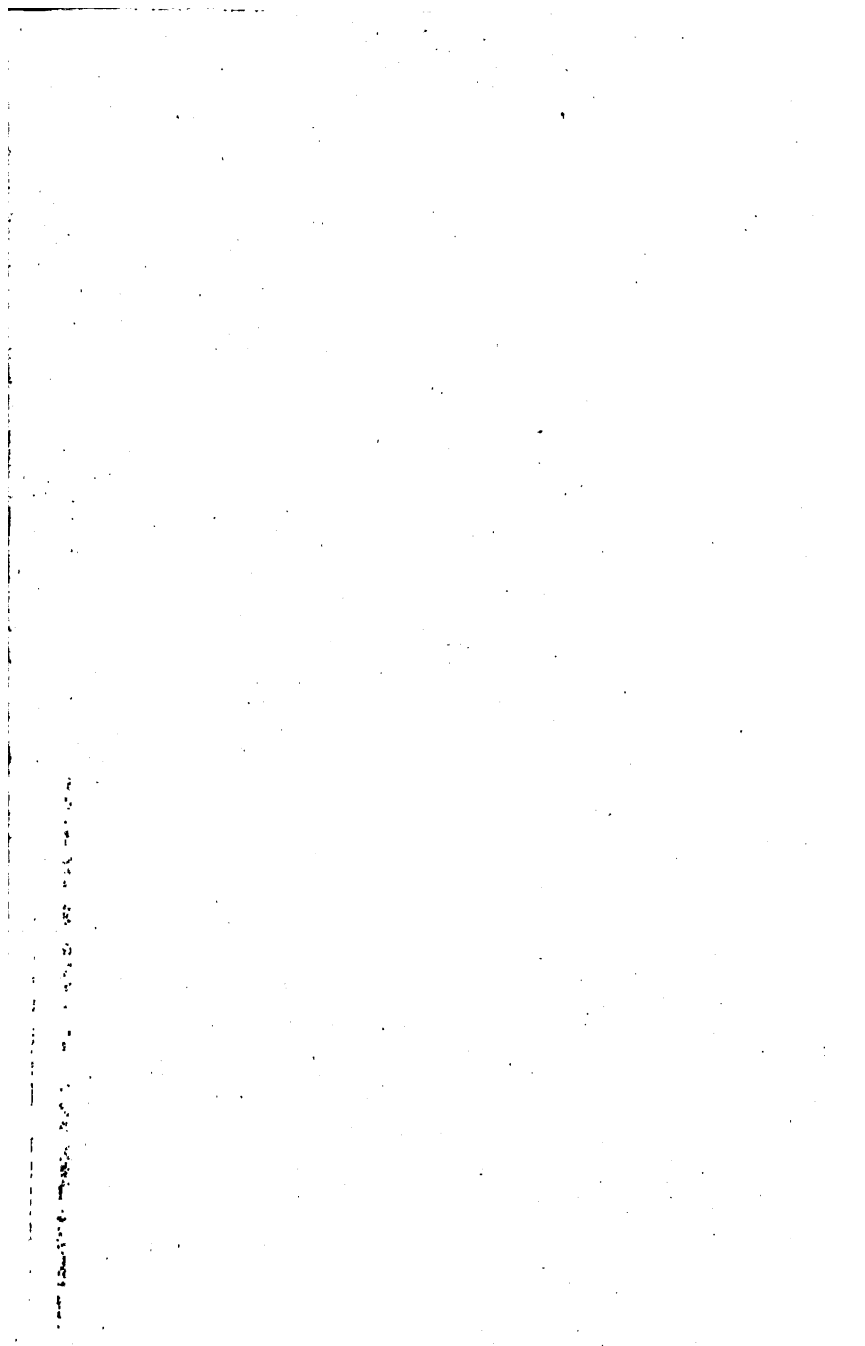
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ON
BEAUTY:

THREE DISCOURSES

DELIVERED IN THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH.

WITH AN EXPOSITION OF
THE DOCTRINE OF THE BEAUTIFUL ACCORDING
TO PLATO.

BY

JOHN STUART BLACKIE,

PROFESSOR OF GREEK IN THE UNIVERSITY, AND OF ANCIENT LITERATURE
TO THE ROYAL SCOTTISH ACADEMY, EDINBURGH.

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TO

GEORGE HARVEY, R.S.A.,

ROBERT HORN, ESQ., ADVOCATE,

AND

JOHN BROWN, M.D.,

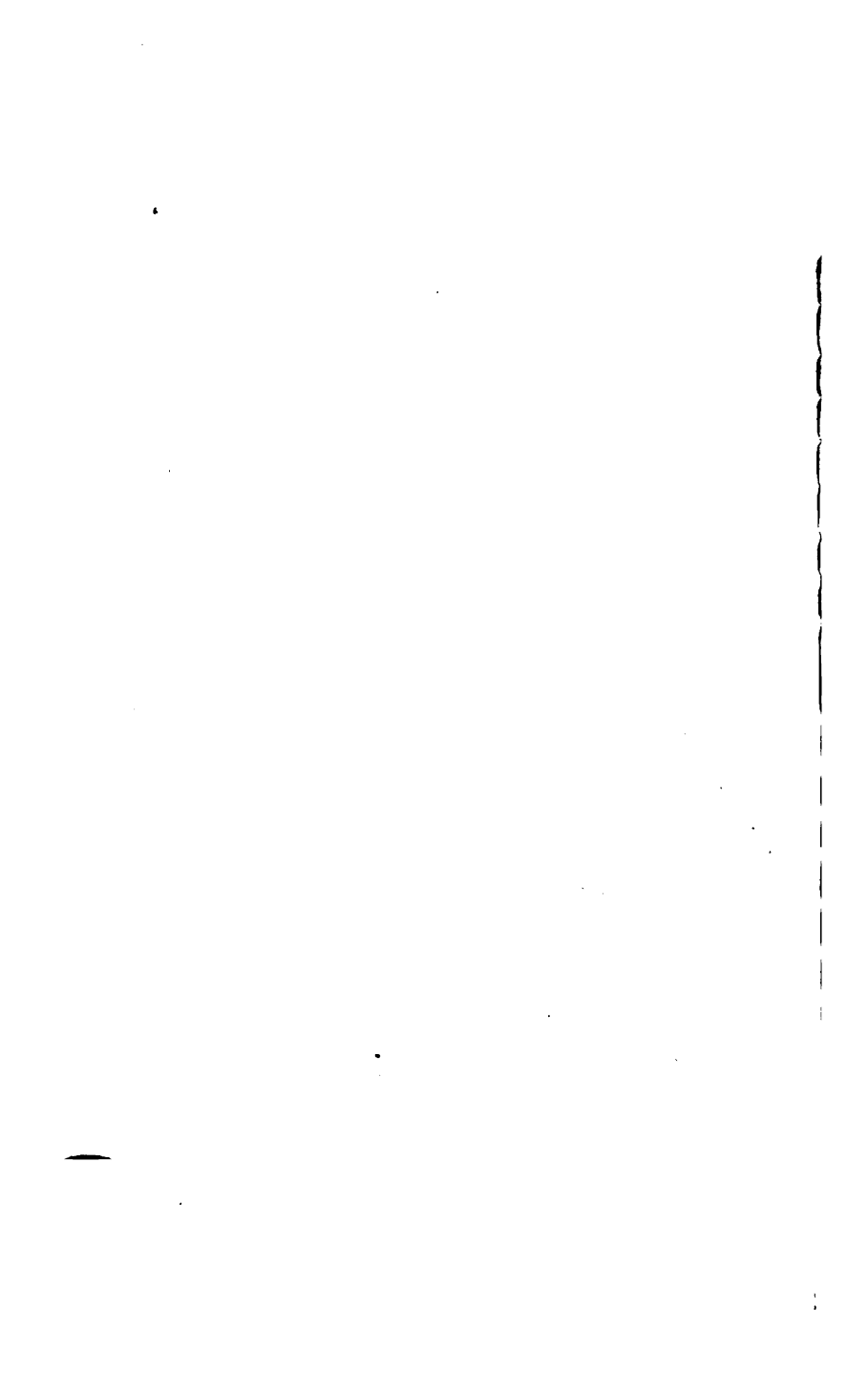
THESE PAGES,

IN MEMORY OF PURE PLEASURES AND HAPPY HOURS,

ARE DEDICATED

BY

THE AUTHOR.



TESTIMONIES OF THE WISE.

Τὸ δὲ θεῖον καλὸν, σφόδρ, ἀγαθόν, καὶ πᾶν ὅτι τοιοῦτον.
'Ο πᾶσι καλὸν καὶ αἰσί.—PLATO.

Τὸ καλὸν ἐν μεγέθει καὶ τάξει ἐστί.—ARISTOTLE.

'*Nec vero illa parva vis Naturæ quod unum hoc animal sentit quid sit ordo, quid sit quod decet, in factis dictisque qui modus. Itaque eorum ipsorum quæ adspectu sentiuntur nullum aliud animal Pulchritudinem, venustatem, convenientiam partium sentit.*'—CICERO.

'*Ibat animus meus per formas corporeas et pulchrum quod per se ipsum, aptum autem quod ad aliquid accommodatum deceret, definiebam et distinguebam et exemplis corporeis adstruebam.*'—ST AUGUSTINE.

'*Ewig wird Er euch seyn der Eine der sich in Viele
Theilt, und Einer jedoch ewig der Einzige bleibt;
Findet in einem die Vielen, empfindet die Vielen wie Einen,
Und ihr habt den Beginn, habet das Ende der Kunst.*'—GOETHE.

'*If there was nothing originally and intrinsically pleasing or beautiful, the associating principle would have no materials on which it could operate.*'—DUGALD STEWART.

'*Beauty is the harmony of objects begetting pleasure to the eye.*'—SIR CHRISTOPHER WREN.

'*A thing of beauty is a joy for ever.*'—KEATS.

'*Beauty, divinest attribute of things,
How true is she!*'—MACKAY.

'*The eternal and divine canons of loveliness.*'—RUSKIN.

"The science of beauty is based on a great harmonic law, which pervades and governs the universe."—HAY.

' — A starved man
Exceeds a fat beast ; we'll not barter, Sir,
The Beautiful for barley !

' Let who says
'The soul's a clean white paper, rather say
A palimpsest, a prophet's holograph
Defiled, erased, and covered by a monk's,
The Apocalypse by a Longus ! poring on
Which obscure text he may discern perhaps
Some fair fine trace of what was written once ;
Some off-stroke of an Alpha and Omega
Expressing the old scripture —.'

—MRS BROWNING.

' Gespeist mit der Anschauung der Wirklichkeit and belebt von der göttlichen Güte treibt der Menschegeist das Wahre und das Gute hervor in entsprechender, verwirklichender Form. Diese Form ist das Schöne.'—BUNSEN.

PREFACE.

WITH regard to the origin of this book, and the shape in which it appears, a few explanations may seem necessary.

About twenty-five years ago, after returning from a prolonged residence in Germany and Italy, and with my head full of pictures, statues, churches, and other beautiful objects, I naturally began to speculate on the subject of Beauty generally, and to attempt to reduce my multifarious observations to general principles. I still possess amongst my manuscripts a complete scheme of a large work on æsthetical philosophy, drawn out by me at that time. But, being convinced afterwards, that the British mind is remarkably intolerant of big books on theoretical subjects, I allowed the projected work to drop, and contented myself with sketching out a popular lecture on Beauty. This was first delivered at Aberdeen about sixteen or seventeen years ago, and has since been delivered with the same fundamental id  a indeed, but with many additions and modifications, in various places; in Edinburgh, Glas-

gow, Perth, Ben Rhydding, and elsewhere. The success which always attended this lecture, determined me to put it into a readable shape on some convenient occasion (for hitherto it had been only spoken from notes), and give it to the public. Accordingly, when about two years ago, I had occasion to discuss the philosophy of the Beautiful to my most advanced students, in illustration of a passage in Plato, a request was made to me by one of my hearers, to give the class a regular lecture on that subject. To this request I at once consented; and, the method of University prelection which I used affording more scope for a full treatment of the subject, it turned out that the one popular lecture expanded into three Academical ones. But neither were these three lectures written out; so that when I came to extend my original notes, with some necessary additions, a much larger amount of matter assumed an organic shape, than I at first contemplated. Add to this, that in the course of developing the subject for the press, I found that my leading principles, though originally elaborated with perfect independence of all authority ancient or modern, were substantially the same as Plato's; and desirous that the essential doctrines which I had to set forth, should be presented to the public with all the weight of the greatest Greek authority on the subject, I determined, as an Appendix to my own views, to give a complete statement of the æsthetical philosophy of Plato. Such an attempt was recommended to me,

further, by its congruity with my own professional occupations, and by the fact that, so far as I knew, nothing of the kind had hitherto proceeded from any English scholar. The general reader, of course, who is incurious about Plato, will consider that the "Three Discourses" are a work complete in themselves, and contain everything that, from my point of view, I consider essentially necessary for a general outline (and I attempt no more) of the great fundamental principles of æsthetics treated as a pure science.

The relation of the doctrines maintained in this book to the general principles of British, and specially of Scottish philosophy, will be sufficiently evident from the concluding remarks of Discourse Third, and from various observations both in the text of the work and in the notes. There is, however, one name which does not appear in these pages, but which unquestionably has as high a claim to be mentioned as any that does appear—I mean SIR WILLIAM HAMILTON. For though that massy and architectural intellect no doubt belonged more to the class of scientifically constructive minds, of which Aristotle is the type, than to those plastic, imaginative, and therefore essentially æsthetical souls, which are represented by Plato, nevertheless so comprehensive in every direction was his survey, so just his discrimination, and so vast his erudition, that he scarcely could have mapped out the philosophy of the human mind in the way he did, without having uttered some dictum, which should be

sufficient to indicate his opinion of the sophistical school of half-thinkers on *Æsthetics*, of whom Jeffrey and Alison were the representatives. Unfortunately, however, for the purposes of this work, that part of Sir William's lectures, to which this subject belongs, has not yet appeared in print; and, various causes having combined to hinder me from getting a sight of his MSS. till it was too late, I have thus been placed in the awkward position of having excluded from mention in these pages the only Scottish thinker, for whose opinions, on an æsthetical subject, I had any real respect. For, to say the truth, with regard not only to Jeffrey and Alison, but to Reid, Stewart, and Brown, and the whole school of Scottish philosophers, I was content, many years, to remain altogether in ignorance of their æsthetical views, from an opinion early formed on presumptions, but found afterwards to be consistent with fact, that these men knew nothing, and from their point of view, could know nothing worth propounding on æsthetics as a pure science. But Hamilton was a man who, I knew, from many years' personal intimacy, which I count among the most honoured of my life, would either say nothing at all on the subject, or deliver himself like one who had the key of the position. I have accordingly, at the eleventh hour, got possession of two pieces of evidence, which, till the great work now under the hands of Professor Mansel and Mr Veitch, shall have appeared, will be sufficient to satisfy the public as to the views taken by Sir William Hamilton

on the important province of mental philosophy, of which a rapid survey is taken in this work. The first piece of evidence is a statement made to me by Mr Veitch, who read the Professor's lectures for two years publicly, when Sir William was disabled, containing what this gentleman considers the substance of his æsthetical philosophy. 'Sir W. Hamilton reduces association to the rank of a secondary and enhancing principle in æsthetics, and regards the æsthetical emotions as specific in character, making them the concomitants of the conjoint energies of the understanding proper, and the representative faculty as variously related to each other.' The other piece of evidence is a letter written by Sir William Hamilton to Mr D. R. Hay of this city, so well known to the public as the friend of Sir Walter Scott, and the author of a series of very ingenious and original works on the geometrical element of the Beautiful. An extract from this letter I now publish, with Mr Hay's permission :—

' 16 GREAT KING STREET, March 5, 1849.

' DEAR SIR—I return you many thanks for your very elegant volume, which is to me extremely interesting, as affording an able contribution to what is the ancient, and, I conceive, the true theory of the beautiful. But though your doctrine coincides with the one prevalent through all antiquity, it appears to me quite independent and original in you, and I esteem it the more that it stands opposed to the hundred one-sided and exclusive views

prevalent in modern times. I have myself made large collections for the illustration and development of the ancient theory, which must be sought out from very recondite sources ; and I have no doubt that, were it fully evolved, and all other theories shown to be only partial conceptions of the one Catholic truth, we modern barbarians in art would be as harmonious as the ancients in speculation and in practice.'

(Signed) ' W. HAMILTON.'

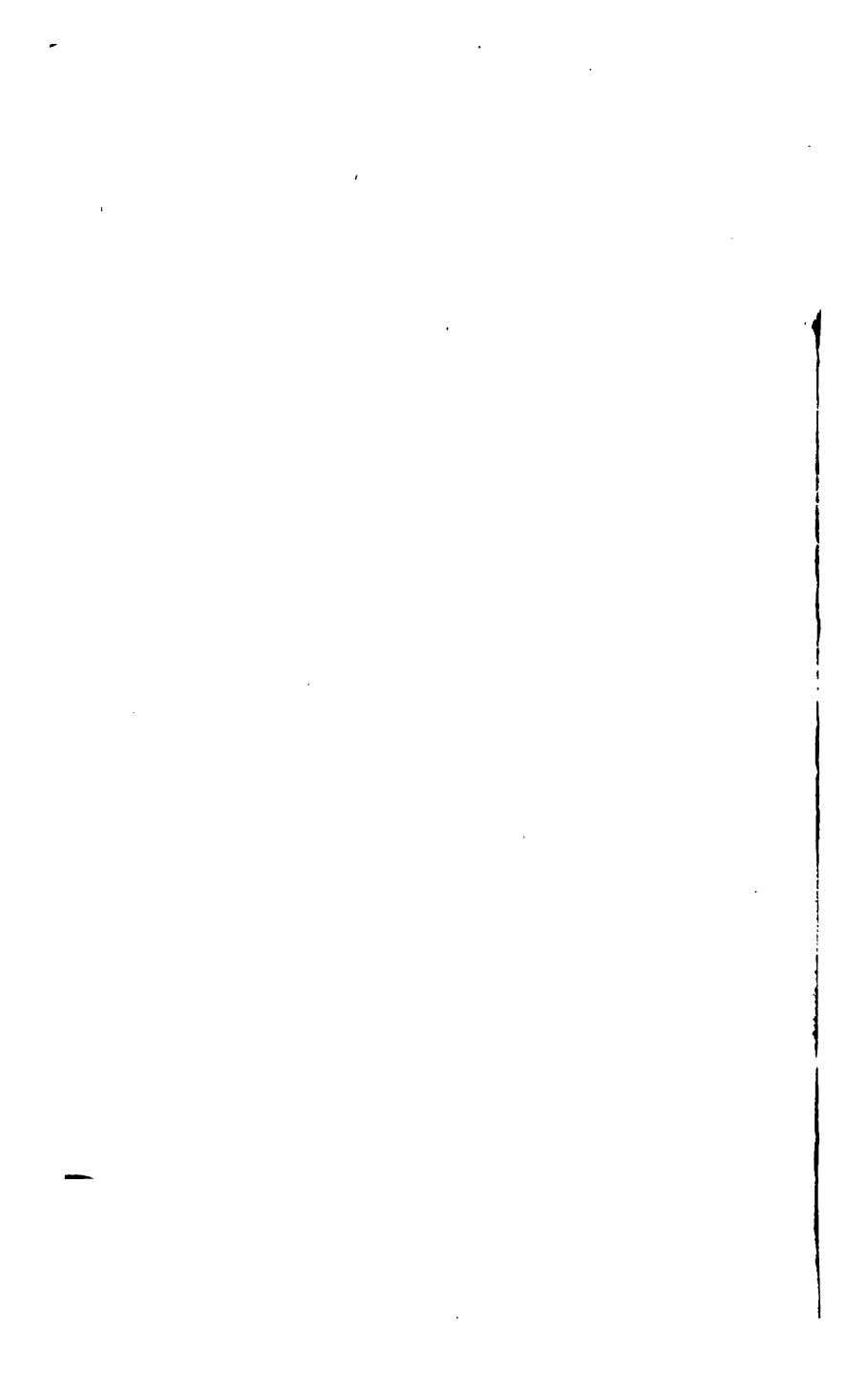
If any person thinks that I have used strong language in some parts of this work, when speaking of the shallow association theory so unfortunately connected with the philosophical reputation of this city, he may see that I am backed to the fullest extent by this highest authority. I am quite willing, indeed, to do battle for eternal and immutable Beauty, altogether independently of any man's authority ; but I am not the less proud to lay my own thoughts on a long and fondly cherished theme before the public, under the ample shield of this Ajax.

EDINBURGH, 26th December 1857.

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DISCOURSES ON BEAUTY.



ON BEAUTY.

DISCOURSE THE FIRST.

IF there be one subject more than another beyond the strict line of his technical teaching, which a professor of Greek learning is bound to understand, that subject is BEAUTY. For, as every individual in this world has his own peculiar gift and prominent faculty, which it is his privilege to use for the glory of his Creator and the good of his fellow-men, so each separate nation has its characteristic function, by virtue of which it assumes a position on the great theatre of life, and plays a part in the mighty drama of centuries. Now, the function which the Greek exercised in ancient times, as contrasted with the Roman, the Egyptian, and the Hebrew, plainly was that finer activity of the shaping imagination which delights to embody its workings in the permanent type of beautiful forms; and this, to such a degree, that, while there is scarcely a region of discursive thought and emotion in which modern wit and fancy have not successfully vied with, and sometimes by notable degrees surpassed the masters of Attic refinement, in the chaste sphere of sculpture, where beauty of form acts alone, the

Greeks still reign supreme; and the greatest Christian moulders in brass and stone, though privileged to enjoy the familiar fellowship of apostles and prophets, now recur with a pure and fresh joy to the rich Pantheon of that early and graceful mythology. When we read in Herodotus¹ that Philip, the son of Butacides, a man of Crotona, had a temple erected to him by the people of Segesta, in Sicily, for no other reason than that he was the most handsome man of his age, we are apt to think it a very pretty madness, or perhaps, if our temper inclines to sternness, a very refined and luxurious sort of impiety. But, in fact, if we will only bear in mind that Beauty was the great national inspiring idea of the Greek people; that the stamp of this most excellent and divine quality is set everywhere on all the creatures of God and all the garniture of creation around us;² and also that all monuments, though apparently in grateful honour of men, are fundamentally as much

¹ "Εὖν τε Ὀλυμπιονίκης καὶ κάλλιστος Ἑλλήνων τῶν κατ' ἑωυτόν. διὰ δὲ τὸ ἑωυτοῦ κάλλος ἐνείκατο παρὰ Ἑγεσταίων τὰ οὐδεὶς ἄλλος ἐπὶ γὰρ τοῦ τάφου αὐτοῦ ἡρώϊον ἰδρυσάμενοι θυσίῃσι αὐτὸν ἱλάσκονται."—V. 47.

² 'Ideas of beauty are among the noblest that can be presented to the human mind, invariably exalting and purifying it according to their degree; and, it would appear, that we are intended by the Deity to be constantly under their influence, because there is not one single object in nature which is not capable of conveying them, and which, to the rightly perceiving mind, does not present an incalculably greater number of beautiful than of deformed parts; there being, in fact, scarcely anything in pure undiseased nature like positive deformity, but only degrees of beauty, or such slight and rare points of permitted contrast, as may render all around them more valuable by their opposition—spots of blackness in creation to make its colours felt.'—RUSKIN, *Modern Painters*, Part i., sect. 1, c. 6.

DISCOURSE THE FIRST.

a public act of devout recognition to the Creator for having blessed earth with so much nobility; viewing the matter in this light we shall become more tolerant in our judgment, and learn to look upon the temple to the beautiful Philip, erected by a polytheistic people, as a monument no less natural, becoming, and graceful, than those raised by the admirers of British intellect to the poetic genius of a Burns, a Byron, and a Scott. To the Greeks Beauty was a divine thing, and worthy of a certain reverent admiration, akin to worship, as much as genius is felt to be by us; and it is the main purpose of the present and the following discourses, to show that the judgment of the Greeks with regard to what we now, with a very base terminology, call 'matters of taste,'¹ was far more noble and true than that which

¹ 'The faculty by which we relish beautiful objects, seems more nearly allied to a feeling of a *sense* than to a process of the understanding.'—BLAIR. Hence the new-fangled German word, *æsthetik* (from *αἴσθησις*, sensation of any kind); but specially, in this case, signifying *the science of the inner sense, or perception of objects contemplated by a well-cultivated imagination*. The term dates only from *Baumgarten* (1750), a German philosopher of the Wolfian school; but the analogy on which it is formed is as old as CICERO, whom Blair quotes: '*omnes enim tacito quodam SENSU sine ulla arte aut ratione, quæ sint in artibus ac rationibus recta et prava dijudicant.*'—*De Orat.*, iii. 50. That there is an internal sense by which we appreciate beauty, was, as is well known, taught by HUTCHESON in Glasgow more than a hundred years ago, in his work entitled, '*An Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue*;' to which phraseology there can be little serious objection, provided that by sense we understand, not a distinct *faculty* of the mind (according to the scholastic fashion of multiplying faculties), but only a function of the imagination, whereby it perceives beautiful forms and sounds, accompanied by a pleasurable emotion. Of the word *æsthetics* I am not at all fond, for three reasons: *first*, because it is new-fangled; *second*, because it is Greek, and a cause of trouble to the unlearned; *third*, because it is not particularly significant, and

prevails in many quarters among us moderns,—infinitely more worthy, in all respects, certainly, than that philosophy of the Beautiful, falsely so called, whose shallow sophisms were propounded with graceful dexterity, and received with unthinking applause, in this literary metropolis of Scotland some fifty years ago.

Scotland, in fact, to speak the plain truth, is a country which, while it has much to be proud of, certainly cannot congratulate itself in any way on having excelled either in the theory or the practice of the Beautiful. In these latter days, indeed, we have pro-

requires explanation before it can be understood. Nevertheless the imperfection of our language seems to render the adjective *æsthetical* necessary; as, indeed, we have many derivatives from the Greek which we could easily replace with Saxon words, were it possible to use these in the adjectival form. FERGUSON certainly has done wrong (*Historical Inquiry*, 1849) in attempting to throw back this word which we took from the Germans with a super-induced meaning, into its original Greek position, meaning *what relates to the senses*. For this purpose we have no use for a Greek expression, having the English word *sensuous* (distinguished from *sensual*), sanctioned by Milton and Coleridge. Either we must retain *æsthetical*, with its modern Germanized meaning, or reject it altogether. This latter course has been taken with his usual intrepidity by Mr RUSKIN (*Modern Painters*, Part iii., sect. 1, chap. 1); but in proposing a substitute he has been singularly unfortunate. 'The faculty by which we perceive and appreciate ideas of beauty,' says he, 'by being called *æsthetic*, is degraded to a mere operation of sense, or perhaps worse, of custom; so that the arts which appeal to it sink into mere amusement, ministers to morbid sensibilities, ticklers and fanners of the soul's sleep.' And, on this ground, which is certainly an exaggeration standing on a merely etymological basis, he proposes to substitute the term *theoretic*. But the original meaning of this word also is neither more nor less than *perceptive*, with special reference to perception by the eye; and the derivative meaning, *contemplative*, *speculative*, or *meditative*, as opposed to *practical*, does not necessarily involve any of those strong moral feelings, the existence of which Mr Ruskin considers as so essentially

duced a few very reputable painters, and seem in the fair way, with God's blessing, of producing more; but we seem to have adopted painting rather as one of the needful decorations of social life, in this age of fair show and smooth refinement, than as a great gospel of the imaginative faculty which we felt ourselves under a sacred obligation to preach. If there be more in it, I thank God; and no doubt there is a great deal more in the hearts of some devoted individual artists; but, as a people, I feel quite assured that we can in no wise be said to breathe the living breath of Beauty, in

interwoven with the perception of Beauty. Coining a term, in accordance with his own strong language in chapter II., he might with more propriety have called the sense of beauty ETHICAL than THEORETICAL. I thoroughly agree with him, that the highest æsthetic culture can never exist without high moral culture; but I think that in this, and in other places of his very valuable works, he shows a tendency to confound two distinct domains in a manner that leads sometimes to positive error, and at other times to grotesque exaggeration. Another objection to the word *theoretic*, as Mr Ruskin employs it, is, that it has already a well-defined meaning in the English language; referring, as it does, merely to scientific speculation, and utterly divorced from emotions of any kind, whether moral or æsthetic. The German *Anschauung* is a term of abstract philosophy, which, so far as Englishmen understand it, they express by *intuition*; and if Mr Ruskin feels that he cannot conscientiously use a word of such low etymology as *æsthetics*, he had much better use the word *intuitional* than *theoretical*, though the one be in fact only the Latin for what the other says in Greek. I am afraid, however, it will be in vain to fight against the combined forces of custom and convenience in matters of this kind. I use the adjective *æsthetic* occasionally, merely because I can find no other word to suit the grammatical analogies of my sentence; and VISCHER, in his great work entitled, *Æsthetik, oder Wissenschaft des Schönen* (3 vols. 8vo, Leipzig, 1846), says, 'the word *æsthetics* has now got prescription in its favour, and is at least harmless, as being quite freed from the idea of "*sensuous*," which originally belonged to it.'

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the same sense in which that expression might, without metaphor, have been used of the ancient Greeks. We are in many respects, I fear, a very utilitarian, a very vulgar, and a very Gothic race. Nor, indeed, is this surprising, seeing that, over and above the materializing influences of the love of money, natural to a mercantile people, and the harshness of mind engendered by the habit of political partisanship, we, in this part of the island, possess a church polity—the extreme form of naked Protestantism—which, starting from the violence of popular image-breaking, has ever maintained a character of bigoted hostility, of morbid jealousy, or of boorish indifference to all the softening influences and the graceful witcheries of the Fine Arts—a polity which formally established that unnatural divorce between Beauty and Faith, which can never be made without robbing the arts of their noblest soul, and devotion of no small charm.¹ With the Greeks the very reverse was the case. Their religion, like all polytheism, being merely a pictorial personation of the most striking powers of nature and of the human soul, and created altogether by the devout working of the imagination, could never come into an attitude of hostility to any purely imaginative art; but did rather, by its very nature, constantly incite and stimulate the exercise of that devout plastic

¹ There is no contradiction between the sentiments here advanced with regard to Presbyterianism, and those expressed by me in another place on the murder of Archbishop Sharp. That homicide was justifiable, because provoked by a violent attack on the conscience of the Scottish people by the King of England; but the remarks in the text apply only to the general qualities of certain forms of church polity as bearing on intellectual culture. In this view, there cannot be the slightest doubt that the abolition of the Episcopate in Scotland, without providing any surrogate for the capabilities of intellectual culture inherent in that form of government, was a great mistake.

faculty which the one-eyed sternness of certain forms of monotheism pitilessly denounces. Monotheism, indeed, in every shape, however much it must recommend itself to the mere reason and the cognitive understanding, makes no appeal to that faculty of our nature which delights in the various play of ever-shifting and ever-beautiful forms; and the consequence plainly is, that every religion which preaches only one God, when pushed to that extreme towards which the narrowness of the human mind is always driving it, will either, with a jealous zeal, pass a universal interdict against the witching language of fair forms, or at least carefully circumscribe its activity within the bounds of what is distinctly and tangibly human. The direct and natural tendency of the highest spiritual truth, that God is a spirit, as vulgarly conceived, certainly never can be to encourage those who believe it to the creation of sensuous forms that bear any approach to what is characteristically called divine; and though Christianity does in no wise expressly forbid the practice of the fine arts, it confines its soul-stirring appeals so exclusively to the conscience, and plants everything human and sensuous at such an infinite distance from what is divine, that we need not be at all surprised when we stumble on the plain historical fact, that the most intimate union of the religion of Christ with the arts of representation, took place in an age and in a country where the native tendencies of the Christian faith were neutralized by a strong admixture of the outward pomp and ceremonial of heathenism. Not less significant is the other historical fact which we find in modern Protestantism as the counterpart of medieval Romanism; for just in proportion as Christianity, de-

nuded of its Popish decorations, has been brought back to all the bareness of its primitive simplicity, do we find that it casts a very shy regard on the arts which represent forms of superhuman Beauty, and has even gone so far, here in Scotland, as to look upon the decoration of the walls of Christian churches with the deeds of Christian saints and heroes as a profanation and a sin.¹ The consequence is, that in lands where extreme Protestantism is professed, the fine arts being thrust violently out of the house of God, are driven to seek refuge in the private parlour or in the public saloon; and the noble arts of painting and sculpture, prevented from consecrating themselves to what is sacred, are glad to obtain a meagre subsistence by ministering to personal vanity and social pomp. In this view, we cannot but admit, if we are honest, that the ancient Greeks stood far a-head of the point where the modern Britons now stand. Amid the multifarious errors of their crude and puerile theology, against which the lofty soul of Plato so indignantly protested, these ancients had at least this one good thing to set against the many good things in which our Christian superiority consists, that, if their religion was less divine than ours, their painting and sculpture, and even the trivial garniture of their daily life, was more religious. If

¹ It deserves to be noticed, however, as a remarkable sign of the times, that in the restoration of the Old Greyfriars Church in this city—a church hallowed by so many memorials of the Covenanting age—not only have painted glass windows of a motley variety of pattern been introduced, but one of these windows also contains a portrait of George Buchanan, the great literary saint of the Reformation. Our venerable Camerons and Pedens, two hundred years ago, would certainly have looked on such a fashion of church decoration as opening a large door to the revival of the Roman Catholic worship of saints.

they had less morality in their temples, they had more devotion in their pictured porticoes and in their statued streets. To them, religion, whatever might be its faults—and they are certainly neither few nor faint—never wore a grim and forbidding aspect. The message which their priests and hierophants had to deliver from their gods, however scant always, and oftentimes ambiguous, was not wont to be marred by studied savagery and the harsh defiance of all grace in the person of its messengers. Where a golden-locked and a lute-playing Apollo was worshipped, the worshippers were not apt to be deluded into the superstitious imagination that the only style of praise from mortal men in which the Supreme Being can delight, is the dismal funereal drone of a crude psalmody, removed at the greatest possible distance from every natural expression of joy and jubilation. To them, painting and sculpture were not arts invented merely or mainly for the purpose of enabling a rich huntsman to ornament the vestibule of his mountain-lodge with groups of wild beasts, or that his fair lady might look upon herself painted with her favourite parrot on her shoulder; but that our small experience of all that is glorious and beautiful in poor, shrivelled, and crippled humanity, might, through the genius of a Phidias and an Alcamenes, be enriched and refreshed by the daily contemplation of perfect human joy in an Apollo, perfect human love in an Aphrodite, and perfect practical wisdom in a Minerva. Where such materials were obvious and exuberant, art could never become degraded, till faith dwindled and became extinct; nay, even after faith had died, and a Lucian might make wanton sport with those forms of awful loveliness which

a Homer revered, such was the vitality of that most beautiful of all mythologies, that the slumbering piety of many was blown into a flame by the mere stimulus of their imaginations; and the heroic young Emperor Julian was certainly not a solitary example of a talented and well-educated ancient, at a time when Hellenism was no longer possible, who cleaved to the dynasty of departing Olympians from the strong faith of a poetic instinct that such gods were too beautiful to be false.

I now proceed to attempt a philosophical analysis and scientific classification of the main elements of the Beautiful in nature and art; from which, when clearly stated, it will be distinctly perceived, by any man capable of reflecting on such subjects, that the foundations of eternal truth, in so-called matters of taste, are laid as firmly in the nature of the human mind, and of every conceivable mind, as the first principles of moral and mathematical science; and that the obligation to beautify the earth, and to make it lovely with cunning works of ingenious device, depends fundamentally on a divine sanction as imperative, wherever possible, as that which accompanied the primal blessing, '*Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it.*'

In what does Beauty consist? Not in one element, or in one power, or in one proportion, but in many elements, powers, and proportions, sometimes combined together, and presented to the observer in such a state of fair entanglement, that when he is most enraptured by the vision, precisely then he finds it most difficult to explain the cause of his delight.¹ We

¹ 'Philosophers have made many just observations on the subject of Beauty; but, from the love of simplicity, have reduced it to fewer

shall commence, therefore, with what is most simple—with the universal and all-prevailing principle, without which the world were no world, and God the creator only of confusion,—I mean the principle of

O R D E R.

It is undoubted that the world is a system of well-ordered parts (a *κόσμος*, *ordering*, or *garniture*, as the earliest Greeks, with a fine perception, named it), and being well-ordered, it is beautiful; and this beautiful order being perceived in stable bodies occupying space, is called SYMMETRY; while in bodies that move through space, it is called MEASURE, or RHYTHM. If any man can open his eyes, and find in the system of things of which we are a part, only a struggle of blind forces accidentally stumbling into propriety, I can only say that he is drunk, and that the bewilderment of his perceptive faculties proceeds not from the nature of the spectacle, but from the sick fumes which infest the brain of the spectator. I break a lump of confused and inorganic rock, and within the purple hollow I behold a bright array of well-bevelled, cunningly-edged crystals, which, when minutely examined by a scientific instrument, present forms of as accurate delineation as ever were projected from the postulates

principles than the nature of the thing will permit, having had in their eyes some particular kinds of Beauty, while they overlooked others.'—REID (Essay viii., *On Taste in General*). A most important observation, not only in reference to the philosophy of taste, but to all sorts of philosophizing. So RUSKIN: 'The difficulty of reasoning on Beauty arises chiefly from the ambiguity of the word, which stands in different people's minds for totally different sensations.'—*Modern Painters*, Part III., sect. i., c. iii.

of a mathematician. Do you find nothing here, in this lowest platform of organized existence, that can lay a sure foundation for your æsthetical philosophy? I do. The nice order or symmetry of those lucid cubes or prisms, I call BEAUTY; and the all-plastic mind that can alone produce that order, and is everywhere producing it, within and around us, I call GOD. This is the old philosophy of Moses, Anaxagoras, and Plato; and it is a perfectly sufficient philosophy for every well-constituted mind. As, out of a lump of shapeless clay, only the hand of the wise potter could mould the shapely vase, so only a wise aboriginal artificer (whom Plato called *δημιουργός*) could, out of mere chaos and crudity, body forth that beautiful harmony of things, whereof human nature is the crown. The simplest element of Beauty, therefore, is ORDER; and the ultimate cause of Beauty is the divine MIND.¹ There are, indeed, many things in the world that seem to us to have no order, and are yet beautiful — towering clouds, drifting snows, racing billows, etc., of which presently; but it requires no microscope to discern that, despite these immense fields where apparent irregularity and even lawlessness prevail, the great law of all cosmical existence is order; in fact, existence everywhere becomes elevated, and culminates only in proportion as the order which inheres in it becomes more cunning, more complex, and more complete. The plant also has its symmetry;

¹ 'To account for the existence and phenomena of either nature or the soul, a Creator, a supreme Lawgiver, must be acknowledged. If there be, as it appears there is, a responsiveness and agreement between them, this only proves the unity or sameness of the Creator of both.'—MACVICAR, *Philosophy of the Beautiful*, chap. ii.

The mystic numbers of old Pythagoras seem visibly incarnated in the white and purple crowns of the many-flowered earth. Even a child may be taught with his fingers to count this mystery; but the skilful botanist, in what does his science consist, if not in the more complete and accomplished apprehension of this most beautiful and delightful order that reigns everywhere supreme in the wide kingdom of green leaves and many-coloured blossoms? Take again Man, or any animal. What makes the bony and the fleshy framework of every living creature so beautiful? There are other elements of personal beauty, no doubt; but the foundation of all is symmetry—the most complete and admirable symmetry. The ancients felt this so truly, that they habitually used the word which expresses form (*μορφή*, *forma*) to signify Beauty generally. Let us imagine any, the plainest human being, suddenly shaken out of the propriety of his bodily compactness, and we shall presently be aware what a potent element of essential beauty belongs to the organization even of those persons whom we are accustomed to think most ugly. Suppose a face with a contorted forehead—a nose not in the middle of the countenance—one eye not in the same line with the other, and squinting to boot—a big wry mouth, with huge tusky teeth projecting in all directions—a warty chin, a goitred neck, a twisted spine, rheumatic joints, carious bones, and dropsical limbs;—conceive one-half of our double body, now so wonderfully harmonious, shifted (as the strata of the earth have sometimes been) out of its natural relations to the other half,—and thus you will see plainly enough how the well-ordered relation of the various parts of our bodily frame does in fact

constitute the necessary substratum of all the other elements of Beauty, that, being superadded, shall complete its attractiveness. So everywhere in nature order is at once the foundation of all actual, and the condition of all possible existence.¹ Even the dissolution of the grave is but the resolution of atoms that have their own cunningly-proportioned constitution, and fly away, eager to put forth in some new sphere their strange capabilities of curiously-calculated combination. We begin to find, when we look into the matter, that even the very sands of the desert are numbered, and that the airy columns into which they are rolled by the fitful Simoom, if not themselves subject to an organic control, are at least as much the ministers of a plan, as the dust which is swept from the stage of a theatre before the appearance of the actors.

So much for the divine order which, reigning everywhere, constitutes so great a part of the beauty of nature. Let us now look at the works of man ; for man, as the Stoics well expressed it, is 'the contemplator and the imitator of the world ;'² that is, according to our present argument, the contemplator and

¹ 'Glaube mir was in der Welt Gesetz und Sitte wir nennen,
Ist auf so leichten Sand nicht wie du wähnest erbaut ;
Alles ist Ordnung und Mass ; sonst konnt es ja nimmer bestehen.
Sieh sur das Wachsende Kraut, sich nur der Thiere Geschlecht.
Immer ein Gleichgewicht muss jedes der Wesen erhalten ;
Die Elemente sogar Wasser, und Feuer und Luft.'

KNEBEL.

² CICERO, *Natura Deorum*, ii. 14. Ruskin says a fine thing also (*Modern Painters*, Part ii., sect. i., c. 4), when in a similar vein he says, 'The preacher and the painter are both commentators on infinity.' Yes, and hence the great imperfections of the works of both ; for when the finite comments on the infinite, there must always be something very inadequate.

the imitator of ORDER. Take Architecture. No art is naturally less of a fine art than this. It is the creation of pure necessity. When the rude Troglydotic fathers of our race could not find a cave, naturally prepared, for shelter against sun or storm, they built a hut. It was the most simple thing in the world. A few stems of trees, with lopped branches, as well as the rude instruments of primitive art might allow, were stuck into the ground in a circle, and made to lean against one another at the upper end, so as to form a cone. This rude framework was then covered with skins of wild beasts, or turf, or twisted osiers, or all the three; and a hole being left somewhere for entrance and exit, the house was made. A house certainly! but how different from those stately piles of nicely-hewn and richly-decorated stone that line the streets of our modern European capitals! And wherein lies the difference? That principle of our nature was it that, out of those rude and frail beginnings, deduced the stability of the Doric column, the commodity of the well-lighted balcony, the grace of the richly-decorated pediment? The principle of improvement and progression, no doubt, generally; but this included among other elements, specially the love of symmetry in external forms innate in the human soul, so that, under favourable circumstances (there being no absolute necessity anywhere in the development of our nature), in proportion as human dwellings increased in the most important qualities of commodity and stability, they increased also in elegance, in fair proportions, in beauty,

Architecture hath three conditions: commodity, firmness, and beauty.—*Sir Henry Wotton*, quoted by GARBETT.

in magnificence.¹ Man may most comprehensively be defined a being capable of conceiving an Ideal, and of devoting his whole energies, year after year, and age after age, to its realization ; and the realization of this ideal is the creation of a fair order in the little world shaped by human activity, just as the great scheme of nature, man included, is the result of a similar plastic energy on the part of the Great Spirit. Take another, and the most popular of all the arts whose direct object it is to create a beautiful organism. Poetry is this art ; the organism which it creates is the well-jointed structure of intelligent discourse, in the harmoniously elaborated procession of significant sounds. Poetry is, like architecture, a product in the first place of mere necessity ; for if speech be necessary in a free and social being, in order that mutual understanding and joint action may be possible, poetry may justly be looked upon as speech elevated into Beauty,² even as the Parthenon and St Peter's are the culminations of the first rude huts of the Troglo-dyte. And yet, so essential is it to the human being

¹ GARBETT goes much further than I do, and states broadly, 'The rudest huts erected by savage nations present on their exterior some evidence of unnecessary design, some regularity or symmetry not required for their internal purposes.'—(*Rudimentary Treatise on Architecture*, London, 1850.) If this be actually a fact, it strengthens my argument. I have been much delighted with this book ; and am glad to see that FERGUSON, in his late great work, calls it 'a work that contains more information and more common sense criticism on Architecture than any in our language.'

² FERGUSON, in his *Historical Inquiry into the Principles of Beauty in Art* (London 1849), has stated the general proposition, 'All that is beautiful or high in art, is merely an elaboration and refinement of what is fundamentally a useful and a necessary art' (p. 96), and has tabulated the different arts accord-

to attempt the realization of his innate idea of Beauty, that there is no nation, however savage, that has not its war-songs, and its sacrificial hymns, and various other structures of harmoniously-ordered speech. For poetry differs from prose essentially only in this, that it is divided into a series of equal processions of vocal harmony, and curiously-balanced masses: what are called poetical ideas, and metaphors, being found everywhere almost as readily in prose. Why, then, if men could express their ideas not only distinctly, but magnificently, without the artificial structure of measured verses and stanzas, did they, among all nations, nevertheless studiously prefer this more elaborate method of expressing not only their wildest joy and their keenest sorrow, but the results of their severest meditation and profoundest thought? Plainly because delight in the creation of well-ordered artificial structures is an essential element of human nature. It, in fact, is our nature, as some one aptly answered Rousseau; or, as might be said, looking deeper, Art is merely the conforming ourselves, by the free use of intellectual emotion, to the laws of necessary aboriginal harmony which are inherent in the constitution of the universe. A man who makes a pipe and plays on it, is merely submitting the free and irregular blast of breath from his lungs to certain cunningly-proposed laws, that regulate the vibratory motions of air

in several interesting tables. That this principle is correct, can be no doubt; and it may afford a valuable hint to all lovers of the fine arts, always to think they are on dangerous ground when they find themselves separated from the natural root out of which they grew.—See Dr MacVicar's observations on the use of the rhomboidal element in Architecture, *opht of the Beautiful*, 1855, pp. 73 and 83.

confined in measured spaces, in pre-ordained agreement with the structure of the human ear. We can no more refuse to seek delight in rhythm and the well-ordered march of sweet sounds, than we can refuse to experience pleasure from a well-regulated pulse, and a pair of finely-playing lungs. We are healthy and happy in proportion as all our functions act harmoniously; we are human, and elevated above the brute, just in proportion as we can subject everything that comes within the scope of our living action to an ideal law and order, of which we carry the prophecy in our bosom, and behold the divine pattern in the whole scheme of the universe.

I have now shown, by familiar illustrations both from nature and art, that one of the most fundamental and generally traceable elements of Beauty in objects is ORDER. But on what does order depend, and the pleasure we derive from the recognition or production of a symmetrical arrangement, or a well-calculated proportion of parts? The answer to this question also I have already sufficiently indicated. It depends on the presence and on the action of MIND. Mind, in fact, does not, and cannot, exist and manifest its existence in any way but either receptively by the recognition, or projectively by the production of order. Let us look at this great fundamental principle somewhat more in detail. When a child comes forth from the darkness of the womb, and begins to open its eyes upon this various and grandly-marshalled whole of things, which we call the World, it at first sees nothing but a luminous confusion, in the midst of which the little blue orb, which is henceforth to be the medium of its communication with outward things,

wanders and floats about like a mote in the sunbeam, the slave of all those potent impressions of which it is one day to be the recognised critic and the lord. Anon it begins to fix its gaze, and to distinguish objects, and to perform that function which we call vision. Now, what is the meaning of this fixation and this distinguishing? Is it not that the soul of the infant creature, which had been lying previously in a state of torpor, being now brought under the influence of the strong stimuli of the fresh new world, gradually wakes and asserts itself, and concentrates its nascent energy, and goes out, so to speak, into a little field of conquest, and begins to survey the ground of its future operations, and comprehends first some prominent feature of the landscape, and then by dwelling upon it, and laying hold of it with the fangs of perceptiveness for a continued period, does, by frequent repetition of these acts, at length become the master and the disposer of the whole situation? Here, therefore, we have that the very first act of the exhibition of new-born intellect, consists in bringing order out of confusion, by submitting the various materials of shape and colour, which the outward world presents, to the lordship and control of a discriminating soul. Now let us take the case of adult intellect, and observe in what the difference between vulgar observation and a philosophically-trained eye consists. A smart young gentleman, with a silver-headed cane in his hand and cigar in his mouth, comes jauntily into a flower-garden. What does the creature see? He is not curious about the flowers, you may imagine; for he is occupied with nothing in creation at the present moment, seriously, but his own person: all he sees is

great patches of purple, and white, and yellow, shaped into various crowns and bells, enveloped in green, swaying before the breeze and glistening in the sun,—a beautiful spectacle, no doubt, and agreeable even to him ; but if you interrogate him, you will soon come to the end of his knowledge of the wonderfully rich world of growing and blossoming things; and you will discover also, not without sadness, that, while he knows little of the beauty of vegetable forms and colours, he cares less. In fact, he knows nothing more than what, by the constitution of a perceptive being, he is absolutely forced to know; beyond that, all is chaos and confusion to him, as much as to the babe unborn. He has not yet learned to fix his eyes on any object in nature beyond the mere unavoidable reception of surface-impressions. For every purpose of nice and scientific observation, he has eyes but sees not. He looks about with open orbs, and walks like a wakeful person through the broad day of reality; but, like a sleep-walker, whose eyes are open while their sense is shut, he sees nothing all the while with any intensity, but his own vain imaginations and overweening conceits.¹ Contrast with this person a scientific botanist. He also walks in the flower-garden; but he walks, not like a listless stranger, but like a king among hereditary subjects, whose character he intimately knows, and whose welfare it is life's busi-

¹ Read Mr Ruskin's admirable chapter (*Modern Painters*, Part II., sect. i., c. 2), entitled, THAT THE TRUTH OF NATURE IS NOT TO BE DISCERNED BY THE UNEDUCATED SENSES. HUME (*Standard of Taste*) has some excellent observations to the same effect, proving why 'a true judge in the fine arts is observed, even in the most polished ages, to be so rare a character.'

ness to promote. In his mind's eye he has marshalled and arranged the flowery tribes into their natural companies; he knows their relationships and their affinities; he has numbered the delicately cut segments of their starry petals, and watched the unfolding of their leafy sheaths and whorls as a mother watches the development of a fine character in her favourite child. By what faculty does he do this? By the same faculty that enabled him, when sprawling in his nurse's lap on the first days of his extra-uterine existence, to distinguish a stripe of purple colour from green, and a crimson curtain from a white and lucid glass window. His soul, now firmer, gathers up its strength to make a more important conquest in the beautiful world of outward sense. He will know now, not only that a tree is not a green knoll, and that a lily shows a different complexion from a rose; but he will penetrate into the inner camp of the lovely armies of things that grow, and speak to them man by man, and name their chief captains and their mighty men, and live with them and love them. He will know how one tree differs from another tree, and one white-starred floweret from another, not only in outward glory, but in its whole nature, character, and destiny. And he achieves this great work by the innate mission which mind, and mind only, can claim, to marshal and muster an infinity of details under the dominancy of a great hierarchy, so to speak, of commanding ideas.¹

¹ From this point of view may be most easily understood what has been said by a recent writer: 'Beauty is never a unit, it is plural.'—*POETICS*. By F. S. DALLAS. London, 1852. A book full of ingenuity and elegance, which no lover of the gentle art of rhyming would wish to leave unread.

These commanding ideas, in the case of the vegetable world, form tribes, and families, and genera, and species, and great laws of vegetable growth; and they are recognised with joy by the devout scientific inquirer, lording it over them by the native supremacy of a thinking soul, precisely because they are the product of one great Supreme Soul, which embraces both the observed and the observer, under certain eternal and necessary types of all existence. In fact, if we will consider for a moment what order means, we shall see that it could not possibly exist otherwise than by the action of a living principle of UNITY, which shall cause the multifarious parts of which an ordered whole is composed to submit themselves to the disposal of a Law, which, in respect of them, acts with the authority of an absolute lord.¹ If it be proposed, for instance,

¹ Hence the two separate heads of ORDER and CONGRUITY, discussed in this chapter, are treated by Mr Ruskin (vol. ii.) under the title, UNITY; which he subdivides into three kinds—unity of subjection, unity of sequence, and unity of membership. On this subject his remarks are both just and brilliant. But I cannot see why he has given a separate chapter to SYMMETRY: calling this type, according to his favourite play with ethical analogies, *the type of divine justice*, while unity is typical of the *divine comprehensiveness*. For the divine comprehensiveness, which binds diverse things together by a common relationship of whatever kind, is no less distinctly manifested in binding the different atoms of the same material together under the relationship of mere similarity of disposition in space; and if justice be that virtue which ‘gives to every man his own,’ it is as much typified in giving to the body of every animal a head corresponding to its size, as in placing the different pillars of a peristyle Greek temple at regular distances from one another. It is characteristic of Mr Ruskin’s mind, moreover, that in classifying the different elements of Beauty, he commences not with what is most easy, but with what is most difficult, viz., *Infinity*, or the type of divine Incomprehensibility; of which, in the next discourse.

out of any given congeries of amorphous matter to separate a mass in the form of a perfect sphere, this can only be done by an intelligent force,—that is to say, a mind acting either from without, so as to separate a spherical lump by external section, or from within, as nodules and concretions are formed, by a concentric action round a given point, within a given circumference. A blind or unintelligent force could in nowise produce a perfect spherical form in either of these ways; for every impulse that goes to the production of the result must be calculated, and that with the most minute and curious niceness, before a figure of such cunning relations of every part to the whole, and to one central part, could be produced. Calculation can only come from a calculator; government can only come from a governor; and every operation, however regular, always implies an operator. A watch may seem to a superficial observer to move itself; but it was made by a watchmaker, and is regulated by a machinery of which the watchmaker has the control. The bits of brass, and silver, and steel, of which a watch is composed, could no more make themselves into a watch, than a case of letters—to use an old comparison of Cicero's¹—when thrown out on the floor, could by the blind tossings of a million of experiments form themselves into a book. In both cases, the multiplicity of the material which is to receive an ordered arrangement, must submit to receive a stamp from the unity of that energetic, imperial, and plastic force which we call Mind, before any ordered product can step forth. The man who imagines that the Doric

¹ *De Natura Deorum*, II.

columns of the Parthenon could have jumped into their present position, with all those nicely-calculated proportions which they are known to possess, without the agency of what we call Mind, as distinguished from matter, is mad. This is the common argument of natural theologians,—an argument which no impertinent bungling of shallow teleologists can ever rob of its native and invincible force; but mad, in plain verity, scarcely less is he, who can look on the fair proportions of that pillared shrine, and believe that the pleasure which he receives from beholding it proceeds fundamentally from any less radical cause than that delight which intellect, working by the recognition of order, naturally receives from its perfectly presented sensuous manifestation.

It is thus evident, I hope, that the foundations of the philosophy of taste lie, with the deep roots of all moral, metaphysical, and mathematical ideas, in the very essential nature of the human soul, and of the divine mind with which it is our privilege to claim kindred. If it be true that the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles, and if it be impossible for a person who has contemplated the relations of the parts of a trilinear figure, to imagine that this truth should be reversed, no less impossible is it for a person endowed with moral feelings, to imagine that selfishness should be in any possible world superior to love, or for a person capable of being pleasantly moved by beautiful objects, to imagine the possibility of a state of things, where the imagination should find its natural food in distortion, and mind rejoice in the contemplation of chaos. An element of complete and universal chaos is so contrary to the nature of mind,

that, if we could suppose ourselves to be enveloped by such, it would drive the strongest-headed man mad¹ in less than a week. It is even wrong—as some persons do, though it sounds pious—to say that the laws of Beauty ultimately depend on the *will* of God, and beyond this, that no explanation of them ought to be asked or expected.² They depend not upon the will of God—for that phrase seems to imply something arbitrary—but upon the essential nature of God. If God be Mind, the proto-plastic *νοῦς* of Anaxagoras,—and we assert and believe that He is Mind, only because nothing less than an intelligent cause can explain the existence of an intelligent effect,—then, to suppose Him delighting in confusion and chaos, and not in order and symmetry, would be to suppose Him

¹ HUTCHESON, living under the influence of Locke's essentially unideal philosophy, does not take the high Platonic ground maintained in these discourses; but in his chapter (sect. 6) on the *Universality of the Taste of Beauty among Men*, he appeals to experience, and asks, 'Did ever any man make choice of a trapezium, or any irregular curve, for the plan of his house, without necessity, or some great motive of convenience? Among all the fantastic modes of dress, none was ever quite void of uniformity, if it were only in the resemblance of the two sides of the same robe, and in some general aptitude to the human form.'

² 'Why we receive pleasure from some forms and colours, and not from others, is no more to be asked or answered, than why we like sugar, and dislike wormwood. The utmost subtlety of investigation will only lead us to ultimate instincts and principles of human nature, for which no further reason can be given than THE SINGLE WILL OF THE DEITY THAT WE SHALL BE SO CREATED.'—RUSKIN, *Modern Painters*, Part I., sect. i., chap. vi. Hutcheson has the same doctrine, sect. v. Plato nowhere uses this language; but while he ascribes the immortality of the inferior gods to the sovereign will (*βούλησις*) of the Supreme God (*Timæus*, 41 B.), always speaks of *Order* and *Beauty* as things essentially inherent in the Divine nature.

capable of becoming that, the recognised contrary of which is the firm postulate on which the human mind rears its indubitable faith in His existence. As the fountain of all light, He cannot rejoice in darkness ; as the most positive substratum of everything that is, He can in nowise delight in nullity and negation ; as the grand originator and conservator of all system—as the holder together of all that is loose, and the sustainer of things that are ready to fall—He can in no case find pleasure in disorder, and rejoice in discord. In a word, the fundamental laws of Beauty are as eternal and immutable as the attributes of the Divine Mind. God Himself cannot change them ; for that were to walk out of His own perfections, and to disrobe Himself of His essential glory.¹

But you may ask now, wherein does the perception of order by a man of taste differ from the recognition of the same great cosmical quality by a man of science, by a philosopher, by a preacher of moral purity, or by a social reformer ? This is a simple matter. These varieties are but different sides of the same thing—different functions of one faculty. The human mind is essentially one, but it can act and be affected in different ways, so, however, as under every modification

¹ If any person of timid piety—and there are many such in Scotland—thinks this language bold, or even rash, I can only say, that the unwillingness of Hutcheson, and other modern Lockists, to admit those great fundamental truths of cosmical order in the Divine mind, which Plato and Aristotle never conceived the possibility of questioning, appears to me a phenomenon of intellectual cowardice, frigidity, or priggishness, in this Christian age and country, not a little humiliating. It is as if modern philosophy and science had started with the determination of having as little to do as possible with a theology of the universe.

to manifest those primary qualities without which mind could not exist, and cannot even be conceived. Now, when mind, whose characteristic faculty always is to subject what is various and manifold to the absolute domination of its own simple unity,—when this mind asserts, or manifests itself as a mere knowing power, the order in the recognition of which it delights is called science, and the discernor of that order is a man of science. In the apostolic man, again, and the preacher, the principle of order inherent in the mind is energetically asserted in the domain of passion and volition, and action as the product of these two. The self-judging mind here takes the form of what is called conscience; and a well-ordered life is the result of a strong conscience holding rule over the passions and actions, according to their natural relations of subordination and harmony. So it is with the philosopher, the social reformer, and every other variety of the human being, as thinker or actor,—the innate principle of order, without which mind is not mind, and reason becomes madness, manifesting itself under a different phasis, according to the difference of sphere in which its power is put forth, and the different applications of its rich capability. What, then, is the speciality in the case of what with the Germans, for want of a better epithet, we must call the æsthetical action of intellect? Plainly the mind in this case has to do with concrete wholes, originally insinuated by means of the inlets of the external senses, but acted upon and moulded by the imagination (which is a sort of inner and more intellectual sense), so as to receive from it a new, and in the case of the fine arts generally, a more perfect type; and these types of well-

ordered form and colour, being entertained by the mind, produce an emotion of serene pleasure and complete satisfaction—an emotion capable of being intensified to the highest degree, when the fair figures contemplated by the eye of the mind are bodied forth, and made to walk out into the external world, from which their first hints were originally taken, and permanently located in brass, in marble, or on the surface of a firmly compacted wall. Imagination in this case, not understanding or conscience, is the ruling function; and it acts, not by analysing dead bodies to know their elements, but by marshalling them into living groups, to enjoy their excellence and to admire their effects. Hence the very remarkable opposition and antipathy which has ever been remarked between the artistic and the scientific mind. They both work in the same element of Order, but in opposite directions, and with contrary aims. The one probes and dissects, and interrogates and tortures the secret order of things established by God, that he may know what is true; the other unites and combines the grand outlines of the most significant parts of the same order, only that he may create a new and beautiful order of things for himself, and exercise the function of a god in his own world, though it be only an imaginary one. Besides imagination, there is in every æsthetical perception, as we have said, also an emotional element; but there is nothing so peculiar or distinctive in this as to require special analysis;¹ for in fact man is every-

¹ This analysis, however, has been made, at considerable length, by ALISON, in *Essays on Taste* (I., chap. ii., sect. 2), in whose theory of subjective association it was in fact the most prominent thing. The results of such an analysis, in his hands, have been

where as much an emotional as a rational creature; even the mathematician, who lives amid a world of cold and lifeless abstractions, having his ecstatic moments, and his *εὐρηκα*!¹ A merely scientific man, like Cavendish, as he is represented by Wilson, is a monster.

So far of Order. But, as involved in this notion, I must now mention separately, the idea of TOTALITY. A symmetrical object is not merely symmetrical: it is one; it is a whole; it is a well-ordered whole. In order that symmetry of parts may be taken cognizance of by the intellect, the parts cannot be indefinite or infinite;² they must be marked off by a beginning and an end; and, in order that the beginning and the end may have a definite relation to the whole, there is also another point necessary to a complete whole; viz., the

rather to exhibit, in curious detail, the occasional variations to which æsthetical emotion is liable, than to expound the immutable laws on which it is based. Mr DALLAS, in his admirable work above quoted, has some excellent observations on the nature of pleasurable emotion generally, after discussing which, he defines POETRY to be '*the imaginative, harmonious, and unconscious activity of the soul;*' which definition I accept.

¹ But though this be true, it forms no ground for introducing such phrases as a *beautiful theorem*, a *beautiful demonstration*, into a discourse on the principles of taste. Beauty in science appeals to a totally different function of mind from beauty in art, and, indeed, is only a sort of derivative and abusive application of the term. REID, ALISON, JEFFREY, employ this abusive phraseology, coming, I presume, by inheritance from HUTCHESON, who has a whole section (iii.) on the 'Beauty of Theorems.' It is hopeless, as Mr Ruskin says, to argue with men who would be philosophers, and use language so carelessly.

² Every poem, as Aristotle says, must be of a definite magnitude, easily comprehensible by the mind, *εὐσύνοπτος*.—*Poetics*, c. 7 and 23.

middle, according to Aristotle's well-known definition, 'ὅλον δ'ἴσσι τὸ ἔχον ἀρχὴν καὶ μέσον καὶ τελευτήν:' 'A WHOLE IS THAT WHICH HAS A BEGINNING, A MIDDLE, AND AN END.'¹ Simple as this remark may appear in theory, nothing is more difficult sometimes than to realize it in practice. In the first place, every work of art must be one self-included, self-concentrated thing. It must not be scattered, dissipated, rambling, like an army of clouds. It must have a definite outline, pointing out where it begins and where it ends, and marking it distinctly to the eye as a separate compact object of contemplation.² Hence the propriety of those mouldings in architecture which bound off the different parts of a building or a room; they are not merely beautiful in themselves, but tend to keep more apart things which ought never to be allowed to run into one another, and give a decisive air of completeness to each individual member. Hence every pillar

¹ Poetics, 7, with which compare PLATO: Phædrus, 264 c., and the following—

'Didst never, thinking of the fate of man,
His wisdom and his ignorance, discern
The threefold nature of his mortal life,
The balance and the perfect harmony
Of THREE, the holy number of the world?
Past, Present, Future, merging into one,
And one for ever in the eternal Mind?
Beginning, middle, end, the sum of things.'—MACKAY.

² 'In der organischen Natur macht Abgeschlossenheit der Gestalt das Prinzip ihrer Existenz aus. Hiervon ist die Folge dass die Schönheit sich aus der traumerischen Zufälligkeit losmacht die ihr in der unorganischen Natur anheftet. Das organische Gebilde hat sofort einen bestimmten ästhetischen Charakter, weil es ein wirkliches Individuum ist.'—ROSENKRANZ.

ought to have a capital, and every house a cornice. Hence the necessity of grouping in pictures. A picture, to fix the attention, must be separated from other objects, and carefully drawn round its own centre of interest. Some of Wilkie's paintings—as, for instance, the 'Village Festival'—have been justly blamed for being too loose and scattered in the figures which compose their subject. The strange variety and bustle of a large fair will not make a good picture. For why? It is a motley aggregation, not a whole. It has no definite beginning or end. Many pictures in sacred art seem to violate this natural demand that a picture ought to be one; for are there not two scenes even in Raphael's 'Transfiguration,'—one scene in the air, and the other on the earth? But there is a oneness to the devout feeling, which easily compensates for the merely mechanical dualism; a oneness well indicated by Raphael in the uplifted finger of one of the principal figures of his great picture. Then, again, in literary composition, how triumphantly does the genius of a master shine out in this single matter of the disposition of parts! How many discourses do we hear, even from men of genius, which have no properly marked and well balanced harmony of parts? I have heard famous preachers spend twenty minutes in introducing their subject, leaving only other twenty for its discussion. Next to having plenty of matter, the great art of writing is knowing how to manage it; so that, when finished, it shall leave the impression on the mind of a complete and well-adjusted whole. Every organism in nature has its focus of design, in reference to which it assumes its distinct type, and exhibits a beautiful framework. A poem, a picture, or a philosophical discourse,

can achieve excellence on no less intellectual principle.¹

I will conclude this first part of the subject by answering an objection. If the love of order be a principle so inherent in the human mind, as here stated, what becomes of all the praises that have been so lavishly heaped on the free range of modern English parks, as contrasted with the stiff regularity of the old French landscape gardening? And are not many of the things that we admire most in nature the most irregular? as the peaked summits of great Alpine ridges, the grand sweep of hill and valley, the capricious windings of rivers, the cot and the church, and the old castle, and the whole vagrant furniture of the landscape. Nay, even in art, who will prefer the regular symmetry of the streets of Berlin, Turin, new Edinburgh, or the long unvaried line of the Ludwigstrasse in Munich, to the graceful bend of the picturesque High Street, Oxford, or the rich and fantastic irregularities of Nüremberg, Augsburg, and so many other famous European cities that were more prosperous four hundred years ago than they are now? This objection deserves to be mentioned, but need not detain us long. We have said that order is one element, and the most widely-discernible element of Beauty; but it is not the only thing that man has to admire in

¹ 'Principles of composition are mere principles of common sense in anything, as well as in pictures and buildings. A picture is to have a principal light. Yes; and so is a dinner to have a principal dish, and an oration a principal point, and an air of music a principal note, and every man a principal object. A picture is to have harmony and relation among its parts. Yes; and so is a speech well uttered, and an action well ordered, and a company well chosen, and a ragout well mixed.'—RUSKIN.

this rich and magnificent world, and, like all other good things, it may be ruined by very excess of its own excellence, and demands both a wise discretion in its use, and a salutary limitation by the admixture of other important elements. An irregular range of mountains pleases — why? Not because the mind generally prefers confusion to order, but because, in the case of huge rocky elevations, the imagination is more impressed by the idea of power than by the idea of beauty, and because all forms and forces, whose vast irregularity forbids them to be measured by the human eye, and which even overwhelm the human conception, are more calculated to give the impression of power than such a cunningly-measured, and therefore thoroughly comprehensible whole, as the Parthenon or Yorkminster. Besides, there are in mountain ranges so many and so striking beauties of light and colour,¹ that the mind, perfectly satisfied with the new and ravishing spectacle, has no time to seek the foreign and unnecessary delight of symmetrical form. There is a sort of wild beauty in the eruption of a volcano, though that be one of the most irregular, and, to human ken, incalculable of the phenomena of nature; but who would conclude from this that there is no law in the motions of nature generally, or that it is a mere matter of taste, and in the essential nature of things altogether indifferent, whether a player on a musical instrument keeps time, or a wheeler in the waltz trips the ground in harmonious response to his partner's foot? The beating of any healthy pulse

¹ 'Rocky scenery commonly owes its severe and grand character less to angularity of outline, than to the sharply contrasted light and shade arising from the prevalence of plain surfaces and cuboidal nooks and edges.'—GARBETT, ch. iii.

may convince a man that such objections, if seriously urged, are nonsense. As shade is sometimes delightful, and even darkness has its charms, though light is the essential positive power in nature to which all creatures turn with joy; so irregularity, in some cases, may be overlooked, or even cause a special pleasure, without in the slightest degree shaking the mind from its faith in its great primordial instinct of order.¹ It is quite true also that order may be overdone:² the eternal repetition of the same chord, however beautiful in itself, will so oppress the ear as to make even discord desirable by way of variety. Besides, there is a tame species of order which is the product of a meagre fancy, and a barren invention; and no well-constituted mind can approve of that, any more than a hungry stomach can relish a spare dinner. Herein, no doubt, along with other considerations, lies the secret of the charm with which the fantastic and gracefully lawless architecture of the medieval towns, just alluded to, acts on the mind, as contrasted with the regularity of the principal streets of the New Town of Edinburgh. It is not alone that the streets are straight and parallel,—which in itself certainly were no offence,—but that the houses are bald. One sees that the men who erected these long rows of bare walls and square holes were Puritans and Presbyterians of the ancient unmitigated severity; or meagre-minded per-

¹ A good example of a work of art, which, though irregular and capricious, pleases, without establishing any general principle in favour of irregularity, is found in Ariosto's Orlando; on which HUME, in his *Essay on the Standard of Taste*, has some admirable remarks.

² 'Uniformity is singular in one capital circumstance, that it is apt to disgust by excess.'—Lord KAMES.

sons of an altogether utilitarian stamp, who, if they had been consulted in the creation of the vegetable world, would have caused the potato to grow in the fields without blossom, because the root is the only part eaten. But neither with regard to Nuremberg, nor any of the famous medieval towns, is it true that the mind, when contemplating the rich irregularity of their curiously-carved gables and turrets, delights positively in mere lawlessness and confusion. There is a style, amid all the variety, which is always congruous with itself: the gables and turrets with which the houses are topped, though individually different, always possess the same light grace and the same quaint freedom. There is identity of character: not uniformity of type.¹ And this observation brings me, by an easy transition, to the second great element of Beauty in nature and in art: I mean,²

CONGRUITY.³

Let us consider how mind, delighting by its essential constitution in symmetry and rhythm, is by the same constitution forced to delight in Congruity. Every order, or arrangement, as we have seen, whether of

¹ The same observation applies to landscape.—‘A picturesque landscape is the object in nature which exhibits Beauty most divorced from symmetry; and hence picturesqueness has been not inaptly termed “a beauty of parts.” But there is more in it than this: for a picturesque scene, however seemingly unsymmetrical, will be found, in its best aspect, to be symmetrized at least ærially, by the influence of light, shade, and colour, which bind together the isolated beauty-spots by a subtle but most visible bond of union.’—PATTERSON in *Blackwood's Magazine*, December, 1853. An original and ingenious paper, and well worth reading.

² See Appendix.

³ Called by Plato *συστάσιν πρέπουσαν*.—Phædrus, 268, D.

the particles of matter in space, or the moments of progressive time, is the result of the energy of the imperial force called Mind, submitting the multiplicity of otherwise confused elements to the marshalling power of that unity which is its essential characteristic. But in order to be thus marshalled, the things of which we have spoken as receiving this impress from the mastery of a plastic power, must be in their character homogeneous. The pillars that surround the walls of a Greek temple; the long pointed windows that admit the dim, solemn light into the arched aisles and vaulted transepts of a Christian cathedral; the movements of the feet in a dance; the pulsations of the blood in a healthy person; the segments of a flower; the revolutions of a planet; or the intervals between concordant notes in a musical scale,—all these are associations of like with like, according to a fixed law, imposed by mind and perceptible to mind. But how shall that unity of idea, by which intellect asserts its innate lordship over matter, be manifested in the cases of a complex assortment of things that are essentially different, so as not to admit of being marshalled according to the two most general forms which embrace all existence, viz., space and time? How shall mind assert its supremacy so as to establish an order between things belonging to such different domains, as a pillar, a song, a colour, and a smile? Under what mysterious art of mastery shall we comprehend the thought that stirs a man's heart, the swelling wave that breaks at his feet, and the minster bell that travels over the green meadow, and wreathes itself with invisible pulsations through the curiously convolved chambers of his ear? There are only two ways possible by which the mind

can impress a common character of unity upon things so diverse: either by finding in the things themselves some common element, by virtue of which, notwithstanding their diversity, they impress the soul in a similar way, or by subjecting these things to a common influence of thought or emotion proceeding from its own activity; and the common character, amid diversity, so recognised or so impressed, will be called Congruity, or, if you please, Harmony. An instance or two will make this clear. A colour is plainly a very different thing from a sound: deep blue impressed on the retina of the eye, and F sharp on the key-board of a pianoforte, seem, at first sight, to have absolutely nothing in common, and, of course, to be utterly incapable of being marshalled under any one category used by that mind of which it is the essential character to act by recognising the common element in separate things; but it is not so. More nicely considered, it will appear that the whole of nature is full of analogies, and that it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to find any object in the animate or inanimate world, that, in the midst of the most striking diversity, does not contain some element of intercommunity with some other thing, or with every other thing; and thus a colour and a note of music may be like, not in one way only, but in many ways, in the method of their action upon sensuous beings, for instance, in respect of pleasure and pain, or in the essential laws by which that impression is produced. That the pleasing effect of concordant notes in music upon the ear, depends not on mere subjective association, as some have ignorantly asserted, but on a series of well-ordered ratios, capable of the nicest mathematical cal-

culatation, is certain. It is not in any wise improbable, also, that the pleasing effect of certain combinations of colour may proceed fundamentally upon a similar law; but, without going into these remote regions of curious science, every one feels that bright crimson colour affects the eye in the same way that high and shrill notes affect the ear: the action of each on its proper sense is sharp and strong, and, if long-continued, overpowering. As artillerymen have become deaf by the force of continuous cannon overstretching the drum of the ear, so industrious females have been known to work their eyes blind by assiduous toil over a piece of vermilion needlework. We find here a congruity between the shrill blast of the martial trump, and the scarlet coat which the British soldier wears,—a congruity not accidental, adventitious, or superimposed, but inherent and permanent, and immutably interwoven with the outer framework, and the secret forces of the universe. Another example: Between a rock and a thought, abstractly considered, there may seem no analogy; but whenever we march out of the region of abstractions—which are, in fact, nonentities (for no man can prove that a mere abstraction ever did exist or can exist)—into the wide domain of concrete realities, we are struck with the greatest and most striking resemblances. A great rock and a great thought are like in the element of greatness: both rise above the surrounding level, and both strike the beholder with awe. So it is through all nature. Between things the most diverse, there is a continued play of the most rich, varied, and subtle sympathies; the recognition of which affinity forms indeed one of the great intellectual employments of all nations, especially in their

earliest stage of development: whence are born all varieties of imaginative religions and mythologies, which are, in fact, only grand anthropomorphic exhibitions of the fundamental congruities of the forms and phases of nature, with the thoughts and feelings of the human soul. Hence also poetry: first, in its most broad and popular lines, as exhibited in Homer; then its more subtle and refined delicacies, as elaborated by Wordsworth, Shelley, Goethe, Tennyson, and the other curious word-builders of an age, when the mere lovely play of the imagination could no longer satisfy minds, schooled by all the scientific niceness, and exercised in all the meditative subtlety of a highly developed social state. The poetic art, indeed, may be defined as that which is employed in the cunning discovery and harmoniously-ordered disposition of all the most interesting and striking points of resemblance that exist between the external world of form and colour, and the internal world of thought and feeling; these congruities being founded, for the most part, on the essential and unalterable nature of things—as when life, for instance, harmonizes with light, death with darkness, sorrow with cloudiness, and so forth. But it may, on the other hand, sometimes be the case, that the mind, which is the more powerful of the two factors, may so strongly assert itself, as to create a unity among diverse external things, not by selecting and giving prominence to their congruous elements, but by projecting from within a shade or hue, so strong, as to give a unity of character to the elements of the composite imaginative picture, consisting only in that projection. The violence of individual passion, or the strong bent of eccentric genius, may find out likenesses

in things, where minds in a normal state can see nothing but diversity; and a fancy full of wanton and quirkish conceits, may often delight itself in witching out a strange aspect of congruity between two things essentially incongruous, or even opposite. The ingenuity of this mental exercise will always give pleasure; and they who excel in it are called witty. Now in this case, the congruity, of which we are talking, exists nothing the less really for the strangeness of the elements of contrast out of which it is so clearly elicited; only the mind here plays a more prominent part than the frame of things in conjunction with which it is acting, and the whole exercise of the mental function assumes more the character of a wilful sport than of a serious business. So also sorrow, when very vehement, may tyrannize over nature, and not merely, like the demoniac in the Gospels, walk amongst tombs (which is a very admirable congruity), but look upon life itself as a mere walking death, and the great bustling world as a battle-field, where all noble hopes are mowed down, and all base imaginations stand. Thus has the lonely wanderer amongst mountains often seen a landscape, full of all shapes of green loveliness, suddenly overcast as with the blackness of darkness, from the rapid strides of the electric storm; and yet the landscape, in its essentially beautiful features, remained unchanged: there was no transformation in its soft matted grass—in its rich waving leafage—in its broad swelling hills—in its gently rising knoll, crowned with the graceful village church;—only as when, as a spectre enters a banqueting-room, the banqueters indeed remain as they were, but the sounds of mirth cease, and the lamps burn dim. Now, this unity of

character impressed upon a complex multiplicity of external things by the mind under a particularly strong excitement, will no doubt have its proper place, in dramatic and lyric poetry, where such states of mind are portrayed; and the spectator, reader, or hearer, will recognise a congruity between this temporary violence offered to nature, and the violent passion by which the mind is moved; but no sensible man will imagine, that because superficial, momentary, and altogether imaginary congruities, are in these cases created by the mind, there is therefore no such thing as real and inherent congruity between external nature and the internal emotions of the soul. The permanent feelings of the human mind stand in a relation of necessary accordance with the permanent features of the kindred cosmical mind, just as certainly as the quality of flower and fruit in a plant stands in a similar relation to the influences of rain and sunshine from heaven, by which it is nourished. This stable and stately frame of things, of which man is a part, is not made up of irregular gusts and evanescent whims, however entertaining, but it is a cunning and well-compacted system of ineradicable analogies and indestructible proprieties.

We shall now illustrate this principle of congruity by a few obvious examples from poetry and the fine arts.

A house of four stories, presenting a front of plain stone wall, with five parallelograms cut out for the admission of light in each story (one of the parallelograms, of course, in the ground-floor being used as a door), and having their shortest and longest sides parallel to the ground and the perpendicular rising corner line respectively, is symmetrical in its disposition,

but nothing more. It possesses that one single fundamental element of all beauty in form, which is so universal in the art of building that it is hardly recognised as a beauty at all;¹ and yet the want of it would be a glaring deformity in the meanest style of building that one can conceive. Let us attempt to elevate this bare skeleton of architectural beauty into some semblance of that graceful garb and rich garniture with which plastic Nature, energized by the Divine intelligence, everywhere delights to invest herself. In the ground-floor, suppose that I arch off the head of three of the windows into the early English or lancet type, and place a small coping with Doric mouldings over the fourth, and, making the fifth ground parallelogram smaller than the other four, give it no ornament at all, except on one side a single twisted pillar, like those which frequently appear in clustered colonnades of Byzantine and other medieval workmanship. Let the second story have four windows adorned with rich Corinthian pillars, and one window with plain Tuscan. Upon this, imagine the third story raised, with three windows in the plainest old Egyptian style, and the other two according to the richest type of florid or decorated Gothic. Then remains the fourth or topping story, which we shall suppose decorated in this way: let one window be ornamented with pillars of those graceful lady-like proportions which we find in the Greek Ionic order, and with the appropriate ornaments; let the second window have a circular arch above in the Byzantine fashion; let the third be divided

¹ See the statement of the difference between mere *building* and *architecture*, in FERGUSON'S *Illustrated Hand-Book of Architecture*. London, 1855. Introduction, p. xxvii.

with mullions and transoms into various thin-slitted apertures, admitting scanty light, in the manner generally found in the ancient apartments of academical gentlemen in Oxford and Cambridge; let the fourth be worked over with curiously-flowered stone work, leaving open only two small apertures, one in the form of a cinque foil, and the other in the form of a triangle, and let it be topped with two small arches, one in the shape of a Moorish or horse-shoe arch, and the other in the shape of an ellipse; and let the fifth window remain quite plain. To crown all, let the roof be concealed over two of the windows by a triangular pediment, having its bounding lines notched into small curvilinear sections, as is seen in Ghent and other Flemish towns; let the third window be crowned by a piece of balustrade; let the fourth be crowned by an arched elevation, formed so as to present the heavy type of an old Norman doorway; and let the roof over the fifth window remain blank, the wall being shaven off without even the simplest moulding for a cornice. We have thus put together a grand conglomeration of incongruity in hewn stone. Is there any sane man that could admire a building constructed so systematically on the principle of heterogeneousness?¹ Is there

¹ And yet so inconsiderate sometimes are builders, and such is the tyranny of fashion, that partial perpetrations of such gross incongruities are by no means rare. In the age, for instance, when Gothic architecture was esteemed an inferior style, repairs, or additions, or monumental decorations to Gothic cathedrals, were regularly made in the Italian style,—a barbarism of which frequent examples are to be found in England, and in many continental churches, as in St Stephen's Vienna, the cathedral Prague, and generally in Austria, where a corrupt, flaunting, Italian style of decoration prevails. As an instance of systematic deformation, we may notice also the process now going on in the finest streets of

any nation, however savage, that ever raised an edifice so deliberately outraging every feeling that even the most uncultivated human being possesses in common with the most refined? Congruity, therefore, or the subjection of a composite mass in architecture, or any other congeries of materials, to a common idea or law dictated by imperial mind, is essentially demanded by the very constitution of human nature, or rather, as I already stated with regard to symmetry, by the very notion of intellect. What sort of congruities, therefore, to continue our illustration, must exist in a pile of shapely stone, in order that it may be not merely a commodious and a stable, but a beautiful building, and a magnificent building? It must, in the first place, manifestly have a meaning; it must express something; and every part of its structure must be so formed and so placed, as to combine with the adjacent parts, and with the whole, in conveying to the mind of the spectator the desired expression, in the highest degree of which the materials are capable. It must, in fact, be like a piece of music, a cunning combination of sounds, not ugly in themselves, but achieving a grand intellectual and emotional effect, only when arranged with such subtle delicacy, as that every note

Edinburgh, whereby, when the ground-floor of a tenement is converted into a shop, it is brought out beyond the general front of the building, and built up with all sorts of obtrusive decoration, while the upper part of the building remains in all its original baldness; just as if a Quaker lady should bedizen the skirt of her gown with tiers of flounces and furbelows, while the body and the head-tiring remain in all their Puritan plainness. In a well-ordered state, such unlicensed building would not be allowed; but in England, our boasted freedom has purchased for us the privilege of practising all sorts of architectural deformity with impunity.

bears a certain calculated ratio to that which precedes and that which follows, as well as to another dominant note called the key-note, and through that to the whole.¹ It is, therefore, no easy thing to erect a perfect building, however obvious it may be to perceive the absurdity of such a systematically discordant congeries of architectural types as that which we have imagined. To avoid gross faults is always possible to a circumspect man, especially in an art where, as in architecture, the means placed at the disposal of the artist are often so scanty; but in proportion as the materials are rich, and the combinations complex, does the difficulty of placing them all under the dominancy of a single uniform idea increase. The simplest form of architecture that we commonly use in public buildings which affect ornament, is the Doric. The character of a Doric pillar, as contrasted with an Ionic, a Corinthian, or the clustered pillars of the Gothic style, is strength, stability, and plainness. This character, therefore, and this only, ought to be expressed by an edifice in this style; for as it is impossible for a soul to be both gay and grave at the same moment,—to be as light as a Frenchman

¹ The want of such a common tone, proceeding from the inspiration of one dominant, constantly present Master Mind, is the cause of the unsatisfactory impression made by the painted windows in the New Greyfriars Church, Edinburgh. The windows were, in fact, made by different artists, without being subject to any common harmonizing influence; and even in those windows which are the work of the same artist, there is a decided want of unity of character, and therefore a failure in total effect. This defect is the more noticeable on account of the small size of the church. In large cathedrals, similar incongruities occur not seldom; but they justly escape notice, not being in a position to invade the eye at one and the same moment of distinct regard.

and as serious as a German, while performing the same function,—so no work of art which is confined to the expression of a single moment, can be both simple and florid; it must either be this or that, for in attempting to be both, it becomes neither. But to show how many and very delicate considerations enter into the structure of the simplest building, that will have a decided character, we shall mention one or two other congruities, besides that of mere stony mass and shape, which the architect must attend to,—otherwise a failure, to a certain extent at least, is inevitable. A building must, for one thing, manifestly be in harmony with its site. If you have a hill, for instance, like the Calton Hill in Edinburgh, rising into various irregular craggy points, and if you were to erect on such a finely varied elevation a large, many-tiered, monotonous edifice, like a Manchester manufactory, a Prussian barracks, or the palace of Otho, king of Greece, in Athens, you would be committing a great offence. But top these irregular craggy projections with a series of irregularly - rising light towers, and monumental shrines, and you bring your pile of shapely stones into a kindly congruity with the forms of nature, which even an unpractised eye, by the fidelity of natural instinct, will recognise. In the second place, a building must be in harmony with the materials which are at the architect's command. Granite, which is always an element of the sublime in art (witness the three great public monuments in Vienna, and the interior of the British Linen Company's Bank Office, Edinburgh), demands one style of architecture; brick, another, and a very different style. The English, who labour in many places under a great lack of good

stones, have as yet done very little in bringing out the æsthetical character of brick-work. Again, a building must be in harmony with its purpose. Fitness for a purpose, indeed, is not beauty; but unfitness for a purpose, especially in such a utilitarian art as architecture, always mars beauty, by mingling sharp discord with the general harmony of the expression.¹ We cannot admire a building, however beautifully shaped, if ill adapted for its purpose, any more than we can admire a wine-glass which could not be raised to the mouth without cutting the lips of the drinker. A school, for instance, is not an Egyptian temple, where a veiled Isis is worshipped, and in

¹ Let this be enough to have said of that loose use of language, in which some modern writers have indulged, who have confounded three things so essentially different as *fitness*, *utility*, and *beauty*. It has always appeared to me exceeding strange, that philosophers will not accept the plain dictates of healthy human understanding in these matters, which command us to believe that ideas, if essentially the same, could never have been represented in all languages by words which the untutored instinct of every boor feels to be distinct. In the *Hippias Major* of Plato (which Jeffrey ignorantly quotes for Plato's notions on Beauty, instead of the *Philebus*) there is a great deal of tentative talk about this subject of Beauty, from which, though the positive result that comes out is almost nothing, it is at least pretty plainly indicated that the *τὸ καλόν* is neither the *τὸ χρήσιμον*, nor the *τὸ πρίπον*: this latter word being used in the dialogue to signify *fitness* for an end, and not comeliness, seemliness, and propriety. The distinction of the three ideas is so plain, that it were waste of words to employ more than a single sentence, in showing the impertinence of a whole chapter in the work of HUTCHESON, otherwise not without value. Of twenty bridges that may be built, all are *fitted* for crossing rivers, and all are *useful* to the public; but only one, or not even one, may be a *beautiful* bridge; and if it be also *picturesque* (a sub-species of the Beautiful, of which afterwards), it will be indebted, in all likelihood, to anything rather than to the skill of the architect. With *utility* and *fitness* the artist has nothing to do, except to take care that the beauty which he impresses on his

which shaven priests mumble in religious solemnity the mysteries of an unknown creed : therefore, the close, unwindowed, narrow-gated, sombre, old Egyptian style of architecture, will not be suitable for a school; but rather the expression of school architecture, and the character of school grounds, must be like that of healthy boyhood, free, open, expansive, and cheerful. A Quaker meeting-house, in the same way, with a portico of rich composite columns, and an entablature blossoming with flaunting festoons, would speak like a sort of stone sarcasm against the plain bonnets and the unfringed tippets of the simple worshippers within; and as little, on the other hand, would the

work, shall not be inconsistent with the plain and obvious fitness or utility which is implied in the very conception of the work. A good architect will make a beautiful building; but to achieve that beauty, he will not require to sacrifice convenience. A shoe may have fine leather and fine buckles; but it must fit in the first place. The distinction between beauty and fitness Mr RUSKIN has treated admirably, under the head of *Proportion Apparent and Constructive* (*Modern Painters*, vol. ii., ON UNITY). VISCHER distinguishes between *das Gute* and *das Gut*, very justly, thus : ‘*Der sich verwirklichende Selbstzweck heisst DAS GUTE, die Fülle der erwirkten Mittel des äussern zwecks, sofern der Mensch als Sinnewesen in ihr sich genießt heisst DAS GUT.*’—Vol. i., sect. 23. This is exactly what Augustin says, in a passage which I noted many years ago from the *Confessions*: ‘Num amamus aliquid nisi pulchrum? Quid est ergo PULCHRUM? et quid est PULCHRITUDO? Quid est quod nos allicit et conciliat rebus quæ amamus? Nisi enim esset in eis DECUS et SPECIES, nullo modo nos ad se moverent. Et animadvertēbam et videbam in ipsis corporibus aliud esse QUASI TOTUM et ideo PULCHRUM, aliud autem quod ideo deceret quoniam APTE ACCOMMODARETUR alicui, sicut pars corporis ad universum suum, aut calceamentum ad pedem et similia.’—*Confess.* iv. 13. The ludicrous consequences of confounding Beauty with a mere vulgar utility or fitness for direct material uses, will be found also admirably touched in the dialogue between Critobulus and Socrates —*Xenophon, Sympos.* v.

rich solemnity and graceful propriety of an English cathedral service appear to dwell comfortably within the four naked square walls of some Presbyterian meeting-house.¹ Yet more : a building must be in harmony with the climate of the country to which it belongs, and with the character and habits of its inhabitants. For this reason, though I can fully comprehend the propriety of relieving the sternness of the old Doric style in ancient Greece by polychromatic decorations, I should doubt very much the good taste of attempting—if, indeed, it were practicable—any such gay embellishment in sober Scotland ; nay, I doubt much whether even in Berlin or Munich, where the sun shines much more brightly than in Edinburgh, the public buildings be not somewhat over-decorated and over-painted, with reference to the character both of the people and of the atmosphere.² Lastly, a building

¹ In harmony with the above remarks, HOGARTH says, ' I can't help thinking but that churches, palaces, hospitals, prisons, common houses, and summer houses, might be built more in distinct characters than they are, by contriving orders suitable to each ; whereas, were a modern architect to build a palace in Lapland or the West Indies, Palladio must be his guide, nor would he dare to stir a step without his book.'—*Analysis*, c. viii. The best illustration of this that I know, is the Domkirche in Berlin, the interior of which represents a fine dancing saloon, in which the cross, the candlestick, and the pulpit, are the only objects that are completely out of keeping with the general aspect of the architecture. The ornamentation of the frieze in the church of the Madeleine, in Paris, falls under a similar censure ; but it is a comparatively small matter. The Bavarian architects have bungled Modern Athens by not considering the luxury of shade, and the propriety of courts and porticoes in that hot region.

² 'In the pyramidal part of the steeple of St Vedast's, London, by Sir Christopher Wren, the plan is a figure of four concave quadrants, repeated on a diminished scale. The depth of hollowing in this figure does not, in an English climate, form a sufficient substi-

ought to be congruous with the character and tastes of its inhabitants, living or dead. Abbotsford, with its irregular turrets and 'pepper-boxes,' as they are called by persons of a vulgar imagination, was a fitting abode for Walter Scott. What reader of the *Lady of the Lake* could have trodden, with any feeling of satisfaction, the threshold of the great Scottish poet's manorial home, if he must have entered to a hall hung with all the quaint symbolism of medieval life through a portico of magnificent Corinthian columns, where, from walls painted in the light and graceful Greek style seen in Pompeii, a golden Aphrodite and a silver-bowed Apollo had smiled him welcome? Walter Scott built his own house, and was guided in its decoration by the instinct of the poet, equally potent to trim a villa or to turn a verse; but not every architect, being left to himself, would in this case have followed the guidance of so very natural a congruity. He might have followed the dictation of his own classical crotchet, devoted with an intense one-eyed admiration to the forms of some undeviating traditional type; not knowing that the man who would achieve excellence in poetry or the arts, must, above all things, strive to get beyond the narrow horizon of his own favourite notion,—that his main business must be to know and to appreciate the notions of his fellow-men; for much of the grand secret of his skill lies in his ability to identify himself with their position, and to express their feelings, as each separate case may require, with a happy tact and a wise propriety.

tute for thorough piercing or detached members, so that the whole is too solid and flat, but *would answer well in Italian sunshine.*—*Rudimentary Architecture*, by T. TALBOT BURY, architect, London, 1853.

A decorative art of a very different kind may next furnish some apt illustrations — I mean the art of DRESS. On this subject a large book might easily be written; for as the diversity of human appearance and character is remarkably great, and the diversity of various-threaded and many-coloured vestments is no less striking, the congruous and incongruous combinations of which the clothed figure of man is capable must be proportionally numerous. But a few of the most general categories, under which these numerous varieties are comprehended, may be stated shortly; and their application would be sufficiently easy, were not this whole region so usurped by the rage for novelty in some points, and the slavery of custom in others, that the laws of tasteful human clothing may be stated with the most imperative evidence, and yet altogether without hope that reasonable men will dream of acting reasonably in a matter where freak and fancy have so long exercised their lawless sovereignty.¹ The outline of the human frame unquestionably offers the starting-point from which all considerations of vestimentary congruity must proceed; and yet we know that some dresses seem to have been

¹ 'In this age men have ceased to think on dress as an ornament; and it has, in consequence, become a mere matter of conventional convenience; and though women spend half their lives in thinking of and working at nothing else, it would be difficult to discover what object they have in view except getting rid of the greatest possible amount of cash, and trying practically to carry out the precepts of the second commandment, by making themselves as unlike as possible to anything in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the waters under the earth; and, it must be confessed, with wonderful success.'—FERGUSON, p. 98. Strongly said, though, it must be confessed, not without strong provocation.

made for the purpose of burying the human frame, and not for displaying it, while others seem to have been fashioned by some ingenious trifler making tentative approaches towards the identification of the outward show of the great unfeathered biped with a swallow or a cockatoo. Again, the dress of a human being ought manifestly to be in harmony with his character and occupation, and the service which he has to perform; and yet we know that when our soldiers first landed on the shores of the Dardanelles, in the late Crimean war, it appeared plainly, in the very first exercise of a hot day, that some parts of their dress seemed to have been made systematically on the principle of adding as much discomfort as possible to their otherwise hard life, and making those motions of the body difficult and fatiguing, which nature had wished, and soldiership demands, to be accomplished with ease. The dress of the Christian priesthood in the Romish and Greek churches is no less objectionable; not indeed on account of any incongruity of those flowing robes with the service which they have to perform, but from the discordant aspect which both service and decorations present to the character of the religion which they profess. No doubt there is a sort of chaste ornament, or even rich embellishment, if tempered by certain sobering influences, with which Christian worship may be made to harmonize. An instance of this we have in the Gothic architecture of Christian cathedrals, in which, though the ornamentation be sometimes extremely rich, and even profuse,¹ there is in the general

¹ Some of the continental churches are painted all over internally, as Notre Dame in Paris, and the singularly rich and very effective little chapel of the *Justice* in the same city.

tone and style of the architecture, lofty towers, long-drawn aisles, air-borne vaultings, deep sombre shadows, and windows not bright with the glare of vulgar day, a combination of sobering powers that puts all light imaginations to flight even in the hearts of the most frivolous. But the dress of the priests, as its tawdry pomp was fashioned by the gross sensuousness of the corrupted Christian faith in the middle ages, has no mitigating element. To pass from the Lord's Supper, as it is imprinted on our imagination by the simple narrative of the Apostle John, to a procession of Romish or Greek priests circumambulating the church in every variety of richly-flounced stole and brocaded cassock, all crisp with silver and rigid with gold, is a most strange transition, full of startling incongruity to a thinking mind. But let us pass on to the dress of private persons, in which the tyranny of hereditary custom is less severe, and a greater scope is left to the instinctive play of a healthy fancy. 'A woman, to dress well,' says a graceful writer of the present age,¹ 'should know three things: her age, her position, and her points.' Wisely spoken. A woman certainly ought to know her own age, though it may be often expedient that other persons should not know it; and if she numbers her years truly, she ought to know the dress that becomes them. Nevertheless, persons of the female sex are sometimes governed by very perverse whims in this matter. A natural desire to compensate for the decay of bodily charms by exhibiting to the greatest advantage the bloom that yet remains, leads not a few fair ones to dress

¹ *The Art of Dress*; reprinted from the *Quarterly Review*. London: Murray, 1854.

in a more juvenile style at fifty than at five and twenty. And this principle of compensation ought to have a certain play, no doubt; but it must be used with moderation, and watched with jealousy. A flirt of nineteen, with broad rustling silks, and a gaily pictured French fan, and a bright eye restless with twinkling vanity, may give innocent amusement even to a grave man for an hour; but a flirt of fifty, tagged with the gayest trappings of youth, discommends herself by her mere appearance, alike to the foolish spectator and to the wise. Again, a young widow of thirty, walking about in grave-clothes after the months of her mourning are over, appears to me incongruous: those who live in the sun's light, should not wear the weeds of the sunless dead for ever; but this discord is small compared with the feeling which a gaudy widow inspires, arrived at the age when, to use the phrase of an apostle, all widows ought to be 'widows indeed.' So much for age. The second thing necessary for appropriate dress, which the sentence we have quoted lays down, is POSITION. On this nothing need be said. Fine silks and chapped hands will never harmonize; neither ought the parson's daughter to emulate the pearls and laces of her ducal ladyship at the last county ball, even though her father could afford it. But there is something that goes deeper into the philosophy of a woman's dress than station or even age, and that is, as our sentence expresses it, her POINTS. Now a woman's points are of two kinds, physical and moral; and with both of these she must observe a nice congruity: otherwise no expense will teach her to embellish her person in such a way as to catch a lover, or please a husband of refined taste.

By physical points, I mean stature, figure, complexion, and such like ; by moral points, I mean character—sweetness, gentleness, animation, pensiveness, hilarity, and so forth. As to stature, it is manifest that a large and somewhat unwieldy woman should not wear a chintz or muslin of a small and frittered pattern, which would only make the grossness of her proportions more offensive by contrast ; nor, reversely, should a small pretty woman be seen flaunting about in an envelopment of huge triple flounces, or large dangling flowers ; nor, again, should a lady of easy flowing contour, and a graceful manner, display a gown stamped with a stiff and formal pattern, as rigid as the lines of a sour schoolmaster's face. Then, as to the congruity of habiliments with character, the simplicity of the Quaker dress, for instance, has been much admired, and justly ; for the Quaker matron generally carries with her that serene atmosphere of moral repose, to which a gay and flaunting vesture would be a discord ; but a young Quaker lady, in the most sportive season of life, full of laughing fancies and fluttering sensibilities, being pinned up in a plain gray bodice, is as great a mistake, in its way, as a minister of the Gospel or a grave philosopher in a harlequin's coat ; and, therefore, I have observed that young ladies of that sect, especially when they are pretty and lively, do not at all affect the severe costume of the placid people ; and handsome young gentlemen, of the same persuasion, naturally assume to themselves a like license. So much stronger is nature in her lustihood, than the conceits of prim religionists. In hair, and in hair-dressing also, there lies a great element of beauty, which few women are so stupid as not to know how to

use effectively. Ladies of a quiet disposition and a calm manner, especially if to the gentleness of their sex they can add a certain sedate dignity, having also a good forehead and profile, should dress their hair very simply with a smooth unadorned braiding; for thus the pure statuesque character of their beauty will come forth with a more undisturbed totality; and symmetry of form, combined with a chaste serenity of expression, and a graceful dignity of gait, will exercise an easy sway over all beholders. On the other hand, females of great vivacity of spirits, and mobility of expression, should let their hair flow loose in free curls or ringlets; the flashing of dark eyes, and the scattering of bright thoughts, suit well with the fluttering grace of this adornment. There is another reason also why ladies with quick and electric eyes (the Homeric *ἑλκώπιδες*) should wear their tresses in ringlets, roving freely as much before the face as possible. For their dark and dangerous glances are thus sent out like the shot of a body of *tirailleurs* from a thicket; and the power in both cases being but partly revealed, and more than half concealed, strikes with a more startling effect than a force that stands distinctly before us, and can be measured by inches. But it is unnecessary to pursue this illustration further. The instinct of women, unless when perverted by some tyrannous fashion, will generally lead them to a fitting decoration of their fair forms, as surely as a poetical genius will lead a poet to choose that sort of measure which is most suitable for the special inspiration by which he is possessed. The precept of the philosopher may indeed give a useful regulative hint to both, but the motive power must come from within; and it is a

power which, like everything vital, has the marvellous virtue of fashioning forth its own machinery.

Let us now take an illustration from Poetry. Mr Alison, in his elegant and ingenious, but sophistical work on Taste, has the following criticism on Homer:—
 ‘ In the speech of Agamemnon to Idomeneus, in the fourth book of the *Iliad*, a circumstance is introduced altogether inconsistent both with the dignity of the speech, and the majesty of Epic Poetry—

Divine Idomeneus ! what thanks we owe
 To worth like thine, what praise shall we bestow !
 To thee the foremost honours are decreed,
 First in the fight, and every graceful deed :
For this, in banquets, when the generous bowls
Restore our blood, and raise the warriors' souls,
Though all the rest with stated rules be bound,
Unmix'd, unmeasur'd are thy goblets crown'd.

Instances of the same defect may be found in the comparison of the sudden cure of Mars's wound to the coagulation of curds,—in that of Ajax retreating before the Trojans, to an ass driven by boys from a field of corn,—in the comparison of an obstinate combat between the Greeks and the Trojans, to the stubborn struggle between two peasants about the limits of their respective grounds,—in that of Ajax flying from ship to ship to encounter the Trojans, to a horseman riding several horses at once, and showing his dexterity by vaulting from one to another.’

Now, plausible as these remarks appear, they are altogether false, being made from a point of view that does not belong to that species of composition on which the critic is commenting. The *Iliad* is not a poem to which ‘ the majesty of Epic Poetry,’ as we now conceive

it, in this age of super-refinement and highly-potentiated culture, could possibly belong. There are many things in the Old Testament, also, altogether inconsistent with the dignity of modern speech; but they are not, therefore, in bad taste, or out of keeping with the author's subject, with his purpose, or with his position. We must distinguish between the essential dignity of nature, which is as immutable as the Divine attributes, and the mere artificial ideas of dignity which belong to men at particular stages of civilization, and with sensibilities made elegantly morbid by over-culture. The coagulation of curds may be a vulgar idea to a modern Episcopal clergyman; but it is not so in the nature of things, or to an audience who could call a swineherd divine (ὄρες ὑποφύσας), and whose kings had no more honourable title than that of 'shepherds of the people.' The incongruity pointed out by Mr Alison between Homer's metaphors and the imagination of modern gentlemen, is a real one; but it is not this sort of disharmony by which the merit of such a work as the *Iliad* can be affected. Any work of the poetic art can be scientifically estimated only when read in the same spirit in which it was written.¹ He who has not first learned to seize this spirit should hold his tongue; but critics are a forward-witted generation, and hasty to plant themselves between the writer and the reader, as a separate object of attention; whereas their only really valuable function is that of the keeper of a pic-

¹ THOMAS A KEMPIS gives this rule specially with regard to the interpretation of Scripture: '*Omnis scriptura sacra eo spiritu legi debet quo facta est.*'—*Imitat. Christi*. i. 3, 1.—A maxim, how simply beautiful to enunciate; but, alas! with all how difficult, with many how impossible to realise!

ture gallery, who draws the curtain aside, and tells you from what point of view the artist meant that you should contemplate his work. Only thus will the natural congruities inherent in a great work be displayed, and the impertinences gagged of a would-be-wise beholder, eager to speak before he has learnt to look.

These examples may serve to illustrate the operation of a principle founded so essentially in the nature of mind, and in the inmost constitution of things, that there is no kind of composite excellence of any kind, in nature, or art, or human life, that can be achieved without it. From the humblest fence that encircles a mountain farm, to the proudest cornice that crowns an imperial palace, there is nothing so mean that the presence of congruity may not ennoble, nothing so high that its absence may not disfigure. From the binding of a book to the preaching of a sermon; from the tittle-tattle of a tea-table to the oration that, being launched forth in the senate of a great nation, carries a thunder on its wing that is to shake the foundations of civil society in more than half the world; in every movement, in every voice, in every garb, in every look, in every symbol, of which the complex play of life is made up, there are, at every moment, uncounted secret harmonies at work, necessary in some degree for the doing of the thing at all, necessary in a high degree for the doing of the thing well. And herein plainly lies the cause why it is so difficult in this world to do any great work in a finished style. For not only must all the materials employed in a perfect work be of the best quality, but they must all be organized into a whole by the presiding power of a

conception, at once grand in its outline, and consistent in every minutest detail; and this work of so many diverse elements charmed into a sweet concord by the force of genius, must not merely be congruous with itself, but with the situation and the living environment to which it belongs. What great natural gifts, for instance, and what rich and well-husbanded acquisitions, are necessary to the making of a great orator!¹ A voice that, as occasion requires, shall be sweet as the tinkling silver, or terrible as the pealing thunder; a calm, clear, kingly eye, that surveys, without confusion, every realm of nature, and comprehends every form of human life; a heart responsive in its every beat to the wide heart of humanity, and ready, at the slightest move, now to darken into severest indignation, now to burst into tears of the tenderest pity;—all this combined with the most ready and serviceable memory—with the most vigorous muscle of throat and chest—with the firmest nerves—with the most dexterous agility of fancy, and the easiest grace of bodily movement;—and yet all this may fail to produce a great speech. For, besides these necessary elements of rhetorical congruity belonging to the speaker, there is the occasion and the audience, both which must stand to the speaker in a certain harmonious relation, before an effective speech

¹ What is the characteristic element that distinguishes eloquence from poetry? Apart from verse, which may be dispensed with, the two sorts of compositions differ essentially in their aim,—that of the orator being to stir the will, and to urge to action, that of the poet, to delight the imagination, and to harmonize the emotions. From this fundamental difference of immediate purpose, the most important laws of criticism that regulate excellence in oratory and poetry may be scientifically deduced.

can be delivered. The man may have spoken much wisdom, and glowed with noble passion, and his sentences may have been rolled off with the easy weight of accomplished mastership; nevertheless the effect was petty, and the speech was a mistake. Why? Because the speaker did not know his audience; because, even if he had known it, he might not have been able to tune his soul into harmony with it; and for this lack of congruity, the vivid power of thought, and the grand flow of diction, that would have commanded unbounded applause at Oxford, is received with cold indifference, or may even provoke sneers in Glasgow. Further, there are certain moral harmonies in a man's life, which, if they be not observed, will tend seriously to mar the effect of the highest display of oratorical talent.¹ '*Nemo bonus orator, nisi vir bonus,*' says QUINCTILIAN; a maxim which we may translate into a larger form, and say: No artistic harmony, however high, can please the æsthetic faculty, if it be accompanied with moral discords. Any work of art, though addressed directly to the imagination, does, in fact, affect the whole man; for the man is not composed of separate bundles, but he is one and inseparable, and cannot cease to have moral feelings, merely because you wield a skilful brush or a nimble tongue. The moral congruities being the deepest seated and most ineradicable, must be assumed as a necessary substratum by all artists and exhibitors,

¹ PLATO, in fact, felt strongly, and has distinctly stated, that *morality* and *beauty* are only different applications of the same principle of *harmony*, and constantly run into one another. 'Νῦν δὴ καταπέφηνεν ἡμῖν ἡ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ δύναμις εἰς τὴν τοῦ καλοῦ φύσιν. Μετρίότης γὰρ καὶ συμμετρία κάλλος δῆπου καὶ ἀρετὴ πανταχοῦ συμβαίνει γίγνεσθαι.'—PHILEBUS, 64, E.

even the most fanciful.¹ If they do not aspire directly to stimulate and to elevate the noblest part of human nature, they must at least beware not to offend, or even to ignore it.

With these observations I conclude the important subject of Order and Congruity. In my next discourse, after a few remarks on the philosophy of HUMOUR, I shall proceed to set forth, under separate heads, some other and more simple elements of Beauty, to which the all-comprehensive principle of Congruity is applied.

¹ 'Der würdigste Gehalt des Schönen liegt in den sittlichen Mächten des öffentlichen Lebens. Die jetzige Zeit fordert geschichtlichen politischen Gehalt.'—VISCHER, vol. i., sect. 20. It is pleasant to hear these words from a countryman of GOETHE, whose great mind was not free from a certain weakness, that tended to separate art too much from the healthy control of moral laws, and from the invigorating atmosphere of social life. But this is a vice which belonged to him as a German, and a child of the eighteenth century; a vice, therefore, in reference to which it were but reasonable that English critics should exercise a little of that charity which is so prominently praised in the New Testament, and so systematically neglected by the English in the hasty judgments which they pass on the character and genius of foreign nations.

DISCOURSE THE SECOND.

IN the previous discourse, I hope I have sufficiently established that the world, in so far as it is a cosmos, and not a chaos,—in so far as it is manifestly made upon a plan, and not shaken into shape by a blind fortuitous force,—is necessarily an ordered system ; that this order proceeds, and can proceed only, from an imperially-disposing Mind ; that in virtue of this mind-created order, the frame of things by which we are surrounded becomes cognoscible to the kindred mind of man, whose function it is first to recognise order in the great world of God, and then to create it in a certain small world of his own ; and finally, that this order, when, after penetrating through the sensuous inlets, it is recognised by the mind, produces in the emotional part of our nature a feeling of satisfaction, pleasure, delight, rapture, according to the excellence of the order perceived, and the sensibility of the intellect perceiving ; and the order so recognised, even in the lowest degree, is, when compared with mere chaos and confusion, a species of Beauty. But as this order is so universal—the world being, in fact, as we have said, impossible without it—in the common use of speech, those only are called beautiful objects which contain this primal element of all Beauty in an

eminent degree, accompanied also with certain other elements of Beauty, of which presently.¹ More especially, Beauty is increased when the unifying principle of order asserts itself proudly, in giving a oneness of character to elements that are naturally diverse and apparently incompatible. The sort of order thus produced is, as we have seen, congruity; and as the production of this harmony among things of the most diverse type, is possible only by the exercise of a high intellectual force, great in proportion to the quantity of materials to be marshalled under the same relationship, it follows that the highest manifestations of intellect will always be in the production of congruity, and the most glorious triumph of the soul with itself, and its most serene satisfaction, must ever spring from the exercise of such productiveness. If so, it necessarily follows, that the perception of the incongruous must be a pain and a grievance to the soul, just as a musical instrument out of tune is a vexation to a cultivated ear. How, then, does the fact stand? Does incongruity actually inflict this great pain upon us? or does it not rather, in many obvious cases, produce pleasure? What is the meaning of LAUGHTER? Do we not laugh, then, when we perceive a striking

¹ The prominence given by me to the principle of ORDER and REGULARITY, contrasts strongly with the cheap manner in which that element is talked of by HOGARTH, in his *Analysis of Beauty*, chap. iii.; but had he been as anxious to set forth the firm metaphysical foundations of simple Beauty, as to comment on the complex practice of the arts, he would have used very different language. All the other elements of Beauty on which he dilates, will be noted by me in their proper places; but I should only confuse the reader, if I were to exhibit complex modifications and variations, before laying a firm basis of what is most scientific and certain.

manifestation of something absurd? and is not an absurdity always an incongruity—an *ἀνομία*, as the Greek has very significantly termed it—an *out-of-placedness*—a want of harmony between the thing and its environment? This leads me to make a few remarks on the nature of the COMICAL, and the HUMOROUS, and their place in a scientific classification of the elements of Beauty.

THE LUDICROUS.

Strictly speaking, the incongruous does not belong to the doctrine of the Beautiful at all; and it is only in a secondary way, from the manifold imperfection of all human things, and for the sake of variety also, it may be, that the Humorous finds a place in the temple of Apollo. There are nine Muses, as we know: of these, one, Melpomene, looks grave, and another, Polyhymnia, thoughtful,—in the others, quiet cheerfulness and serene contemplation give the dominant expression; but there is no laughing Muse, even Thalia being kept in a tone of very tempered hilarity. Olympus, indeed, which was peopled by old Pelasgic men after the likeness of our terrestrial population had its Momus, whose ungracious function it was to expose incongruity where it existed, and (like petulant critics below) to imagine it where it did not exist. But he was a divinity of the very lowest class; and the ancient Bœotian theologer very significantly indicates his affinity, by making him the son of Night, and the brother of Deceit and Strife, and other ill-favoured sisters.¹ We must, therefore, consider

¹ Hesiod, Theogony, i., 214.

that, according to the beautiful mythology of the nicely sensitive Greeks, laughter was not a divine virtue of any potency; for though the lofty-pealing Father, and the golden-throned Hera, and the other supreme gods, amid the light festivities of a celestial banquet, might shake the starry roof of Olympus with inextinguishable cachination, when the divine smith limped about the azure hall, an awkward cup-bearer,¹ yet we find no special patron of absurdity in the Greek heaven; even Dionysus, the god of wine, representing a divine rage, and superhuman excitement of passion, rather than a wanton play of freakish and incongruous ideas. And if this fundamental seriousness pervaded the whole legend and art even of the merry and sensual Greek, how much more must the comical element be utterly banished from the domain of high Christian poetry and art! The pure serenity of seraphim and cherubim in heaven, may perhaps, if occasion offer, be now and then dilated into a smile; but an angel cannot laugh. The two most Christian of all poems are also the gravest:—Dante's *Divine Comedy*, and Milton's *Paradise Lost*. The same severe gravity is maintained in the Christian art of the early German, Flemish, and Italian schools, and of the most recent Germans. In England, in proportion as material Mammon is worshipped, and ideal Beauty misprised, common and comical subjects are allowed to occupy the painter's canvass, and clever books are written, of which the only distinct object seems to have been to make people grin. But if a benignant grin have any place at all in the domain of the Beautiful, it must only be in that very subordinate

¹ Iliad, i., 599.

way which we see in our old cathedrals. No one thinks of laughing in Lincoln or Salisbury Cathedral ; yet if, in passing beneath one of those groined old vaultings, your eye shall be struck by some quaint mask leering down from a row of projecting corbels, by all means enjoy the conceit. It will harm the pious congruity of your thoughts no more than a passing fly can mar the beauty of the Parthenon.

Do we, then, place the humorous so very low ? Is it fully represented by such an altogether dispensable matter as a grinning corbel in a cathedral,—a vague whim, idly thrown out to amuse a single moment in a long life labour of seriousness,—a mere coloured ribbon, to flaunt in the window for an hour upon a holiday,—a frothy bubble upon the surface of the deep ocean, to make a passing play of iridescent light in the sun, and twinkle, and expire ? Is this all that is meant by such world-famous names as Aristophanes and Plantus, Ariosto and Moliere, Jean Paul Richter, Dickens and Thackeray ? I can only answer by saying, that if these names mean only the ludicrous, nothing more certainly could be signified by them than such mere accessory trifles as I have mentioned. But in fact, as is well known, the world's greatest humorists were always the world's most serious thinkers ; and their comical productions may be looked on as sermons, preached, for the sake of variety, in a language with which every tinkling fool may be delighted, while the wisest man may feast upon it with profound delight. Mere laughter, let it be strongly repeated, is the most frothy, empty, and contemptible thing in the world. Any witless boy can laugh at an accidental twist in his schoolmaster's

wig; any green girl can giggle at the smallest oddity in the dress, in the phraseology, or in the manner of a philosopher, of whose discourse, sweet as honey to the wise, she is not competent even to guess a sentence. The ridiculous, as Aristotle well says,¹ lies altogether on the surface, and is the natural property of the superficial. But there is something more than common LAUGHTER in that significant and expansive play of sportive light in the soul, which we call HUMOUR. There is deep thought. Nor is it difficult to see how the richest and the profoundest intellects will, if they are not altogether destitute of the playful element,² be most able to create those original combinations of ideas, naturally far asunder, which affect the humorous sensibility. For only richness of observation can supply the mind with the materials that are to be used by frolicsome fancy in forming such new combinations; and profundity of thought will alone be capable of suggesting those pregnant analogies between

¹ 'Ἐπιπολάζοντος τοῦ γελοίου, καὶ τῶν πλείστων χαιρόντων τῇ παιδιᾷ καὶ τῷ σκώπτειν μᾶλλον ἢ δεῖ.—*Ethic. Nicom.*, iv., 8, 4. The superficial nature of the ludicrous has been also well expressed by the great German thinker, '*Der verständige findet fast alles lächerlich, der vernünftige fast nichts.*'—GOETHE. PLATO, like a true philosopher, says, 'μάταιος ὅς γελοῖον ἄλλο τι ἡγείται ἢ τὸ κακόν.'—*Repub.* v. 452, D.

² That the pleasurable perception of the incongruous which produces laughter, depends fundamentally upon the presence of a sportive element in the soul, seems as certain as that the flow of tears depends upon a pathetic element. SOCRATES, therefore, in the *Philebus*, 50, A, misses the mark very far, when he brings the element of φθόνος, or envious ill-nature, into the γελοῖον. Laughter is essentially good-natured; and humour is exceeding kind. But Plato, as a genuine Greek, could not help fooling himself, with ingenious, though unsound analogies, on occasions.

the very great and the very small, in which the humorous genius delights. The essential pettiness of any affectation of greatness, when the reality fails, can in nowise be more clearly shown, than by kicking down the scaffolding, and tearing off the robes of official dignity,¹ and exhibiting the drama which the human creature is enacting with such assumption in the analogical doings of some animal,—an ass, or a goose, or a bantam-cock,—which is, by its very nature, incapable of inspiring reverence or esteem. On this principle is founded the extensive and well-merited popularity of such works as *Æsop's Fables* and *Reynard the Fox*. If humour be, as Richter has well expressed it, 'the inverted sublime,'² it can only exist in lofty souls, who know what the sublime is. For an idea will not appear comical by inversion, unless to him whose soul has been first filled by the essential grandeur of the idea inverted. For which reason it is that the best humour of a profound thinker is not appreciable by a vulgar mind; for the humorist, as the same Richter has ably shown, even when he is dealing with things apparently the most trivial and accidental, deals with them only as being to his deeper thought types of the great system of the world, and exponents of universal humanity; hence, as only a philosopher can write, so only a thinker can read what is profoundly humorous. Whenever, therefore, there is a healthy foundation of serious-

¹ As in that comical conception of Carlyle, in the *Sartor Resartus*, according to which all the robed and mantled dignities of high life are supposed suddenly denuded of their tissue coverings, and made to stand before gods and men *in puris naturalibus*!

² 'Das Umgekehrte Erhabene.'—*Æsthetik*. sect. 32.

ness in the character, the comical element, even in professional writers of comedy, will always remain in its natural accessory and subordinate position; and laughter, even the loudest, will only be the lighter face of thought. So it was doubtless with Aristophanes, who, if in Socrates he had laughed at virtue and wisdom, would have been a contemptible buffoon; but his aim being the very serious one of exposing the vain-glorious emptiness of the rhetorical hirelings called sophists, with whom Socrates was confounded, we not unwillingly allow his frolicsome madness free wings, for the sake of the earnest thought which it stimulates; even as darkness may, by a wise artist, be cunningly used to make light more visible. So it is with SHAKESPEARE; so with MOLIERE; so with our British Aristophanes, PUNCH, in his best humours. The humorous faculty, when it is of any value, exists for the sake of what is serious; not the serious for the sake of the humorous. If, in any mind, the tendency to perceive the ridiculous becomes so predominant as to trouble in any way the calm, satisfying enjoyment of what is beautiful, that mind has made a step back out of cosmos into chaos; and the dissolution and death of all that is noblest in the human soul is not far distant. For why? Just because there are no solid positive contents in the ridiculous, such as may permanently satisfy a creature, forced by a thousand impulses from within, and goadings from without, to feel daily that life is something very different from a jest. '*Ernst ist das Leben.*' Life is a very serious thing, as the German poet sings; and plainly, so far as we can see, even because it is so serious, hath God given us this pleasant faculty of smiling

and laughing, to accompany us in our hard adventures, as some impish dwarf did the knights of medieval romance, that we may not be oppressed in spirit by excessive solitary brooding over the weighty duties of which we are the champions. We live in a world full of imperfections, and, therefore, full of incongruities. Nay, things in themselves the most perfect, when brought, as they will be on occasions, into hasty and unconsidered relationship, will cause the grossest disharmony in this multitudinous world. A caterpillar may be a beautiful animal on a gooseberry bush, but on a fair lady's bonnet, in a prominent pew at church during public worship, it is incongruous, and may disturb seriously the devotions of him who sees it. A gay, well-dressed youth, mounted on skates, and wheeling on the compact surface of the frozen flood with various lines of graceful curvature, is a beautiful object; so also is the glittering smoothness of the ice on which he makes his evolutions; but if he should suddenly lose his balance, and come plump down on his back, the charm is gone. Between his Mercury-like grace, the moment previous, and his present position, all besmeared with mud, it may be, from the broken puddle, and looking stupidly around to make himself sure that his head is on his shoulders, and his thigh well socketed in his hip-joint, there has arisen a striking disparity; and the spectators will laugh.¹ It might have been otherwise. We might have been constantly fretted by every small incongruity, just as we are now disgusted, when the ab-

¹ 'When improper or incompatible excesses meet, they always excite laughter.'—HOGARTH.

sence of every element of beauty overpowers us by a concentration of the ugly. Why does not every exhibition of incongruity cause unmingled vexation? Obviously because not misery, but happiness, is the constant aim of creation; and the sense of the humorous is brought in, as a grand shield of instinctive self-defence, against the constant annoyance to which we should have been exposed, from hourly collision with some kind of absurdity and incongruity. To weep were too expensive a tribute to pay to every petty impropriety that crosses our path in the many-mingled intercourse of various life; therefore, we must even make a virtue of necessity, and, without lowering our demand for the utmost possible perfection in all things, condescend to make a sport with the necessary imperfection that surrounds us. And if we do so, drawing our main nutriment always, by admiration and love, from the contemplation of the greatest beauty, we shall be great gainers by our laugh, and confirm our virtue by our jest; for no man respects what is ludicrous; and the comic element in our emotions can only then degrade the soul when it has usurped the throne of reverence, and disturbed the fountains of love. What was meant by nature as a convenient trick for getting rid of a troublesome enemy, has no virtue to engender the deeper feelings of delicate love and permanent esteem. Like the arabesque paintings on a palace wall, witty fancies will please the idle spectator in an idle moment; but they are not the building. The building is made of well-hewn and well-compacted stones; and so also was the understanding of Sydney Smith. No wit and humour will exercise any permanent influence that is not some-

thing more than pleasant. Life is too intensely severe a thing to be seriously influenced by a mere jester, however brilliant.

I shall now proceed to state a principle of the beautiful in nature and art, as ineradicably rooted in the nature of all existence as order ; involving something more fundamental even than symmetry, and, when pushed to its consequences, more fertile in significant results. This principle, for want of a better name, I may call the principle of

ACTUALITY.

Man, as a substantially existing creature, must, by the very law of his being, prefer existence to nonentity, what is positive to what is negative ; and, by necessary corollary, must receive delight from everything that exists with decision and vigour, in preference to what exists with indecision and feebleness.

That SOMETHING is preferable to NOTHING ; that reality of every kind must be approved by every real creature, rather than nonentity, requires no proof. It is impossible to enjoy existence, and not sympathise with what is, rather than with what is not. No being can give the lie to itself in this way, any more than conscious calculating intellect can believe that two and two are not four. The one is a postulate of existence as much as the other is an axiom of thought. This postulate being universal, of course applies to every function of the human mind, whether moral, intellectual, or emotional ; but, in the present discussion, we are concerned only with the necessary corollaries that flow from it in reference to our emotions of

the Beautiful. Let us see, then, to what æsthetical conclusions this metaphysical principle must necessarily lead us.

In the first place, if something be better than nothing, an effective something will be preferred to a feeble and inefficient something; for whatsoever exists and enjoys existence, must desire to exist as fully and efficiently as possible, and must sympathise with all full and efficient existence rather than with the contrary. Hence, in nature and in art, vigour will be preferred to feebleness; and how true this is every one feels, without any fine cultivation of taste; for there is not an effective leading article in the *Times*, or other newspaper, which shapes the public opinion of the day, of which, next to a clear and easily intelligible order, VIGOUR is not the grand characteristic. Take any of the great writers whom the world has agreed to look on as patterns of style for all ages—Homer, Pindar, Æschylus, Thucydides, Livy, Tacitus, Dante, Shakespeare, Milton, Schiller, Byron, Burns, Scott—and you will at once perceive, that while these writers may be remarkable for various and even opposite qualities of beautiful composition, yet they are all vigorous: a feeble writer cannot be a classic. In other words, whatever a man is, he must be completely; and whatever he does, he must do distinctly and thoroughly, if his existence and his deeds are to be admired as beautiful. Not only a poem, written under the influence of a half inspiration, but everything done in the world with half a heart, half a head, or half a hand, fails to produce any beautiful effect. To strike with admiration, the virtue that resides in any thing or being must be potentiated; a faculty half asleep, or

numbed by frigid influences or partially palsied, cannot expect to produce any decided impression. All defect and declension is already half down the ladder to non-entity; and being so far in league with nothingness, cannot expect to command the sympathy of anything that has a firm root in reality. It were no easy task to point out in detail how very far this principle goes into the very innermost recesses of artistic representation and critical judgment. For, if vigour be always preferable to weakness, and a decided exhibition of any virtue to a wavering one, then unquestionably mere outward show is less beautiful than that which, along with seeming, possesses also substance; for every lie is a weakness, and must therefore be an object of natural abhorrence to whatever possesses a sound kernel of undisguised actuality.¹ This principle cuts at the root of all sorts of sounding display and rhetorical glitter in literary composition; of everything that is not truly and honestly the well-pronounced outward expression of what is inwardly felt. The world at large has a deep sense of this virtue of honest substantiality in every exhibition that shall command their admiration. If a man makes a fine speech, which is felt to be only a curious procession of harmonious sounds, and not what it is meant to be, a true declaration of inward sentiment, the audience will not allow themselves to be cheated into admiration by such a mere phantasmagoria, any more than the palate will be pleased when the teeth have crushed a hollow nut;

¹ Τὸ μὲν δὴ τῷ ὄντι ψεῦδος οὐ μόνον ὑπὸ θεῶν ἀλλὰ καὶ ὑπ' ἀνθρώπων μισεῖται.—*Plato, Republic*, ii. 382. c. 'A lie is an object of hatred both to gods and men.'

they may possibly make an applausive noise with their hands and feet, if the speaker occupies a commanding position, but they will whisper secretly—*humbug!*¹ Further, if something be better than nothing, then a unit will be better than a cypher, and two units than a single unit, and a great number of units more excellent than a small number; and wealth generally is, in respect of any good thing, better than poverty. Men upon change, and in the market place, never question this very obvious principle; but it has not always been stated with sufficient distinctness, what a great part the same principle plays in the estimate which we form of natural beauty, and of the beauty of works of art. Given two landscapes of equally pleasant outline, and equally harmonious colouring: that will be the more beautiful of the two which possesses the greater number of those various elements of which natural beauty is made up. So of two flower gardens, in which all the same kinds of flowers flourish, there will not be a moment's question between the comparative beauty of that where the flowers are sown spare and meagre, and that where they grow exuberant and profuse. In fact, profuseness—that is to say, mere arithmetical superiority—is one of the chief elements of beauty in natural scenery. A single leaf has

¹ This is another reason, besides our inherent love of reality, why SEEMING without SUBSTANCE, or out of proportion to substance, destroys the effect of every exhibition, viz., because it disappoints expectation. In practically dealing with the world, I know no principle of more importance to be attended to than this. The title of many a book sins grievously in this way. It is always not only bad taste, but bad policy, when the promise that a public man makes, in any way, exceeds his performance.

beauty to microscopic inspection; but only a rich foliage is beautiful to a freely-wandering eye. Does this depend upon association? No; it depends upon, it proceeds from, the positive power of MUCH, when contrasted with LITTLE, to fill the soul and to satisfy the emotion. So again in literature; what raises Shakespeare so high above all other writers, ancient or modern? Is it not the exuberant wealth of his ideas, the redundant richness of his phraseology? Is not Homer praised for quantity as much as quality? Was not Scott rich, was not Goethe liberal and full-handed? Does not a great writer generally produce many great works? For what is the universe itself so remarkable, as for the exhaustless virtue of its forces and of its forms,—the infinitude, so to speak, of its ever-shifting finitudes? Beyond all question, in the appreciation of beauty, as in the calculation of political strength, number is power. That woman is not lovely in her expression who smiles feebly, and smiles only once in the four-and-twenty hours. Nature does nothing scantily.¹

Let us proceed to further applications of the same fertile principle. If a full development of any force or form be always more beautiful than what is meagre and deficient, then Quantity and MAGNITUDE will always exercise a great influence on our æsthetical

¹ The observations in the text agree entirely with Mr RUSKIN's dictum with regard to *greatness in art*. 'I say that the art is greatest which conveys to the mind of the spectator, by any means whatsoever, *the greatest number of the greatest ideas*; and I call an idea great in proportion as it is received by a higher faculty of the mind, and as it more fully occupies, and in occupying, exercises and exalts the faculty by which it is received.'—*Modern Painters*, vol. i., part i., sect. i., c. 2.

judgments. Homer, in describing a beautiful woman, says,—

Καλὴ καὶ μεγάλῃ καὶ ἀγλαὰ ἔργ' εἰδύια.

Beautiful and tall and skilful in cunning works.

And rightly; for stature, doubtless, must always be an important element in every woman's impression, were it only that it fills the eye, and carries with it something imposing to the imagination; but, besides this, it satisfies the understanding by the indication which it affords of a vigorous and unhindered growth. Mr Burke indeed said, that a woman, to be beautiful, must be rather little; but in this he is plainly mistaken; for a little woman may be pretty, but never can be beautiful.¹ Any object, to satisfy the imagination, must at least not fall short of the normal proportions which naturally belong to its genus; if it go a little beyond them so much the better, because this gives an idea of superior power; only let it not go beyond the magnitude marked out for it by nature in the harmonious adjustment of things, otherwise it becomes a monster. A very large woman will certainly not be beautiful; for other reasons, no doubt, as largeness is often accompanied by a certain coarseness; but for this specially, that a humming bird may not be as large as a hen, nor the female of any animal tower above the just proportions of the male. But within these natural limits, a certain stature and magnitude enhances greatly the beauty of a fair woman; and none

¹ Ἐν μεγέθει γὰρ ἡ μέγαλοψυχία, ὥσπερ καὶ τὸ κάλλος ἐν μεγάλῳ σώματι, οἱ μικροὶ δὲ ἀστέιοι καὶ σύμμετροι, καλοὶ δ' οὐ.—
ARISTOTLE, *Ethic. Nicom.*, iv. 3.

can think otherwise but certain male triflers, who can think of women only as children think of dolls.

It were wearisome to follow out a course of illustration through the fine arts, to show the importance of magnitude. We may remark, however, what an important part it plays in architecture; so important, indeed, that whoever does not attend to this element in that noble art, will never achieve any striking excellence. Every art has its strong point, which a wise artist will make the most of with an easy dexterity, instead of consuming his strength in laborious endeavours to prop up what is inherently weak. Colour, for instance, is the strong point of painting, as compared with sculpture; and a bad colourist will, for this failure alone, be justly esteemed a bad painter, let his invention be ever so grand, and his outline ever so accurate. So mass is the strong point of architecture: a fine building overwhelms by mass, as the mountains do that nod over the plain; and as a mountain when it ceases to be large loses its nature and its name, and sinks into a hill or a mere knoll, so architecture without mass may indeed please, but it never can draw out the greatest amount of admiration which belongs to high achievement in that art. Many beautiful pictures are small; the most beautiful poems are often the shortest; but all the fair edifices that have a permanent place in the imagination of the world are large. St Peter's and St Paul's, the temples of Egypt and India, the English cathedrals and the palaces of Florence, are all distinguished by bulk. Nay, a mere circle of rude stones—as at Stonehenge—if they are large, and left to make their natural impression on the mind, by rising undisturbed from a

wide solitary moor, will have more true architectural effect than many a pretty villa, cut and carved into all sorts of fantastic stone-work. For the fantastic is a province that belongs not to solid masonry naturally ; and even the epithet, neat, or pretty, applied to a building, as to an oration, while it expresses the presence of a certain amount of positive merit, always implies the want of some element that is necessary to high excellence. And not only real magnitude is to be sought for previously by all building artists, but also, and even more, apparent magnitude ; for Art has always to do as much, and more, with things as they appear, than with things as they are ; and to the passing spectator it can be of no benefit whatever that a public building is large, if, from situation or unlucky contrast, or any other circumstance, it appears small. No doubt, when a man has time to examine a building minutely, it will always be an agreeable surprise if it turns out larger than it seems. This grateful feeling is experienced by all persons of common observation in going through the interior of St Peter's at Rome ; but the outward face of buildings is not intended to be curiously measured, and must make a great impression at once by mere appearance, otherwise there is a failure. And it is lamentable to observe how common failures of this kind are among architectural monuments. If the Houses of Parliament in London, as has been often remarked, could always be viewed from the level of the water, their mass might be sufficiently imposing ; but being seen generally from the level of the bridge, they fail of effect ; and this not only from want of real height, but from the excess of ornamental Gothic on the exterior, which breaks

down those broad and simple masses that naturally belong to unadorned stone. In order to avoid errors of this kind, the congruity of situation, spoken of in the previous discourse, is above all things to be attended to. The size of the area in which a building is to be placed, and the quantity of open ground left in front of it, is a main consideration. Only a really large building will look large in the midst of a large open space; and for architectural effect, though certainly not for convenience, it is extremely difficult to say which of the two extremes is worse, that streets, as in the old town of Vienna, should be too narrow, or, as in the new town of Edinburgh, too wide. In proportion to the width of the streets, the houses, in the modern part of this city, should be at least one story higher; at present they have an extremely poor and mean aspect,¹ being equally destitute of the simple grandeur of mass, and the grace which proceeds from a rich and skilfully varied embellishment.²

¹ This is now made strikingly apparent in Princes Street, by the building just erected by the Life Association of Scotland Insurance Company at the bottom of the Mound, which, though overladen with ornament, and liable, perhaps, to other objections, has certainly the great virtue of being almost the only building in the street that, in point of mass and pomp, is worthy of so splendid a situation.

² My space does not allow me to pursue this subject further; but I cannot deny myself the pleasure of transcribing the following remarks on the effect of QUANTITY in Beauty from HOGARTH:—

‘Forms of magnitude, although ill-shaped, will, however, on account of their vastness, draw our attention, and raise our admiration.

‘Huge shapeless rocks have a pleasing kind of horror in them, and the wide ocean awes us with its vast contents; but when forms of beauty are presented to the eye in large quantities, the

There remain yet one or two special applications of natural ACTUALISM or POSITIVISM (since technical phrases must be coined sometimes), which we are now considering. If everything positive is naturally preferable to what is merely negative, then motion, in the case of things that move, will be preferable to stagnation; freedom will be preferable to constraint; self-de-

pleasure increases on the mind, and horror is softened into reverence.

‘How solemn and pleasing are groves of high grown trees, great churches, and palaces! Has not even a single spreading oak, grown to maturity, acquired the character of the venerable oak?’

‘Windsor Castle is a noble instance of the effect of quantity. The hugeness of its few distinct parts strikes the eye with uncommon grandeur at a distance as well as nigh. It is quantity, with simplicity, which makes it one of the finest objects in the kingdom, though void of any regular order of architecture.

‘The Façade of the old Louvre at Paris is also remarkable for its quantity. This fragment is allowed to be the finest piece of building in France, though there are many equal, if not superior to it, in all other respects, except that of quantity.

‘Who does not feel a pleasure when he pictures in his mind the immense buildings which once adorned the Lower Egypt, by imagining the whole complete, and ornamented with colossal statues?’

‘Elephants and whales please us with their unwieldy greatness. Even large personages, merely from being so, command respect. Nay, quantity is an addition to the person, which often supplies a deficiency in his figure.

‘The robes of state are always made large and full, because they give a grandeur of appearance suitable to the offices of the greatest distinction. The judges’ robes have an awful dignity given them by the quantity of their contents; and when the train is held up, there is a noble waving line descending from the shoulders of the judge to the hand of his train-bearer. So, when the train is gently thrown aside, it generally falls into a great variety of folds, which again employ the eye, and fix its attention.

‘The grandeur of the Eastern dress, which so far surpasses the European, depends as much on quantity as on costliness.

‘In a word, it is quantity which adds greatness to grace.’

pendence to dependence on an extrinsic power ;¹ and light will be preferable to darkness. There is, indeed, in things naturally stable a beauty of rest and repose, to which the beauty of mass and of symmetry principally applies ; but the effective and creative principle in the world is not rest, but motion ; and the exhibition of this Divine energy, according to the innate laws of its own harmony, must be alone capable of producing the highest impressions of beauty. Here, indeed, we get into a region altogether intangible and immeasurable, and at the same time so rich and varied in its expression, that those who seek for one simple element of the Beautiful (like Socrates in the Platonic dialogue²), amid such a complex dance of fair forces, are naturally not a little puzzled, and even wise men will be befooled by a strange play of “ association of ideas,” and other ingenious juggleries. But there are principles certain enough here, as in the more simple world of forms. And the difficulty of laying hold of them does not prove that they do not exist, or exist without certain laws, but only that they are too rich, and too curiously intertwined, for every five-fingered virtuoso in mental curiosities to make an inventory of their harmonies. Nevertheless, the ultimate elements of æsthetical pleasure in this subtle and ever-shifting world of forces, also, are distinctly recognisable. The mind, in the first place, necessarily delights in motion, because, according to the old and alone true doctrine of Plato in the *Phædrus*,

¹ *Ἡγήσατο γὰρ αὐτὸ ὁ ξυνθεὶς αὐταρκες ὃν ἀμεινον ἔσεσθαι μᾶλλον ἢ προσδεῖς ἄλλων.*—PLATO, *Timæus*, 33, D.

² *Ἡμεῖς γὰρ ἐκεῖνο ζητοῦμεν ὃ πάντα τὰ καλὰ πράγματα καλὰ ἴσθιν, ὥσπερ ὃ πάντα τὰ μέγала ἴσθι μέγала, τῷ ὑπερέχοντι.*—*Hippias Major*, 294, B.

mind is essentially motive, and the originator of motion;¹ so that we are fully warranted in saying, that all the motions in the universe, being manifestly not blind impulses, but ordered forces, are merely the methods of the operation of the Supreme Mind, and the beautiful active thoughts, so to speak, of Him in whom all things that are, live, and move, and have their being. Further, if the mind, as a great motive force, delights in the mere aspect of energetic forces rather than in lethargy and stagnation, it will be the more delighted the more that these forces have a free and unhindered play—always, of course, with due regard to that primary law of order, to which, under the name of rhythm, as we have already shown, all lovely forces are necessarily subordinated. The mind, therefore, by its very nature, and not in virtue of any association with anything else, will delight in all displays of free activity;² and this is so very true, that poetry and the fine arts might be defined to be the *embodiment of the most free activity of a quick imagination according to the law of harmony*. And any person who ever wrote a stanza, or relished it when written, will be able to bear witness to the truth of this definition. In the art of writing poetry, the soul, which, in

¹ In the famous passage (245, D) beginning, “ψυχὴ πᾶσα ἄθάνατος, τὸ γὰρ αἰκίνητον ἄθανατον:” on which see BUNSEN’s remarks in his last work, *GOTT in der Geschichte*, vol. i., p. 40.

² Wherefore Aristotlé defines pleasure, *ἐνέργεια ἀνεμπόδιτος*. *Ethic. Nicom.*, vii. 12. In accordance with which, but more fully and accurately, in reference to æsthetical emotions, Mr DALLAS, as we have already mentioned, defines pleasure to be the ‘*harmonious and unconscious activity of the soul* ;’ the unconsciousness arising from the fact, that a pleasure which fully occupies and satisfies the soul, establishes a centre of instinctive action which excludes the possibility of a simultaneous act of self-reflection. No man analyses an existing pleasure, except with the mad lust of destroying it.

the prosaic state, may be called pedestrian, receives as it were wings, and soars freely through a region of harmonious fancies, which it shapes into audible music as it floats—

*'Laureâ donandus Apollinari
Cum per audaces nova dithyrambos
Verba devolvit, numerisque fertur
Lege solutis.'*

Do you desire a sure test, by which you may discern bad poetry from good, a false inspiration from a true one?—there are many tests; but there is none surer than this—in poetry there is no constraint. Nothing moves stiffly; nothing lumbers uncomfortably; nothing halts; nothing lags; nothing is forced into a position which it would not naturally assume. There is great force everywhere present; and perfect freedom in the disposal of that force. Every line is marked by the elasticity of instinctive vital joy, and the ease of assured power. There is a charm in the mere grace of poetic movement, quite independent of the ideas which the march of sweet articulate sounds conveys; and if you wish to know how mighty a thing this element is in a good poem, read a bad translation. The wildest freedom, combined with the sovereignty of the most curious law—herein lies the mystery of that plastic genius which has always been esteemed the special gift of God to mortal men; because, when its magical virtue is denied, no accumulation of human learning, or concentration of human talent, can prevail to appropriate even the simplest of its witcheries.

A single word now remains to be said on that other grand contrast of nature on which æsthetic judgments are founded—LIGHT and DARKNESS. All creatures

rejoice in the light. Is this necessary? Is it a law or a whim? Does it depend on the essential substance of the Divine Being, and His attributes, or on the association of ideas in the brain of an Episcopal clergyman, or an Edinburgh Reviewer?¹ It is really sad that a reasonable man should be obliged to put such questions; but it is an old disease of philosophy, falsely so called, to work itself, by help of the cunning legerdemain of vague language, into a position of direct hostility to the instincts of all healthy-minded men; which, however, being once achieved, the malady has already worked its own cure; and one is driven back to nature by the mere aspect of the absurdity of men who, by a false show of wisdom, explain away nature, just as the Spartans used to teach their sons temperance by the exhibition of consummated beastliness in drunken Helots. Light is not a necessary thing; that is to say, not absolutely necessary in conception; for we may conceive an ordered world without it, though it were a very dull and joyless world certainly. But a cognoscible world—a system of well-assorted things, that could be known, and appreciated, and admired, without light, is not easily conceivable; for experience practically teaches how few the points of connection between mind and matter are,

¹ Even DUGALD STEWART, who treated the association-sophists with a respect which they did not deserve, could not but stagger at the manifest absurdity of referring the pleasure felt in such a primitive cosmical power as light, to *association*. 'With the greater part of Mr Alison's remarks,' says he, 'on the beauty of colours, forms, and motion, I perfectly agree; although, in the case of the first, I am disposed to ascribe more to the mere organic impression, independently of any association whatever, than he seems willing to allow.'—*Essay on the Beautiful*, c. 2.

which the other senses reveal, in comparison of sight. This is, indeed, pre-eminently the intellectual sense; insomuch, that to see and to know, are in most languages only different applications of the same word.¹ All knowledge of the highest kind is, therefore, by human feeling practically identified with light; and much more so, all happiness and joy; as we may see in the language of all life, and of all poetry, and of all religion, particularly in the description of the new Jerusalem in the Book of Revelations, of which the foundations are garnished with all manner of brilliant precious stones, and pearls, and gold, and glass, and every lucid and luminous material; and yet there was neither sun nor moon there, for the primal source of all light, whence the sun borrows his radiance, even the essential glory of God, did lighten it; and there was no night there.² What shall we say then? Light, so far as we can imagine, is a thing absolutely necessary to all correspondence between the cognos-

¹ Thus *vidi* in Latin is, *οἶδα* in Greek; and *νόεω*, to consider, in later Greek, means to see or observe in Homer; and our word *theory*, or intellectual contemplation, is derived from *θεία*, vision. So the word *intuition* from *intueor*; as in English *insight*, and in German *Einsicht*. It is noticed by Plato (in the *Hippias Major*, 299, A.), that sight and hearing are the only two senses to which the word *καλόν*, beautiful, can be properly allied, the predicate of the other senses being *ἡδύ*, sweet; which distinction is certainly founded in nature, though no doubt there is a difference of coarseness and refinement in the appreciative power of the lowest as of the highest senses.

² The essential divinity of light is clearly indicated by PLATO in the *Timæus* (40, A), where he says that the Great Cause of all formed the race of the gods of luminous and fiery matter, *ὅπως ὅτι λαμπρότατον ἰδεῖν τε κάλλιστον εἶη*—that they might be most SHINING and most BEAUTIFUL.

cent and the cognoscible in creation, between the sentient and the sensible; it is a thing with which positively no fault can be found; the joy of which makes even a Momus forget his banter, and a Diogenes to cease from railing; appreciable the same to a throned king, and to a houseless beggar boy; the one ample element of all truly enjoyable existence; while misery, and guilt, and death, have their habitation in eternal darkness. And as this blessed element plays such a distinguished part in the works of God, it is but natural that its sphere should be equally large in the works of man, which are small imitations of their Divine original. Nevertheless, such is the super-human glory of light, such the riches of its finely diversified harmonies, when broken into the beautiful play of what we call colour, that there is but one human art that makes any successful attempt to represent it—that is painting; to which art, therefore, as a peculiar region, in which not even the large discursive faculty of the poet can be equally at home, belongs that wide domain of nature, where the beauty of mathematical symmetry not being possible, it was necessary to spread over immense surfaces an altogether different attraction, of which the principal element is colour. LANDSCAPE was to be made glorious by the harmonious changes of light; and thus not only was an extensive kingdom delivered over to the beneficent sway of the most enjoyable element in nature, but an antidote was provided against that feeling of wearisome monotony, which would infallibly have seized upon the soul, had the principle of symmetry been as dominant amongst mountains and valleys, as it is in crystals and in the petals of flowers, and in the structure of all organised

bodies. Imagine the most complete landscape in which the genius of a Ruskin, in a fit of fine intoxication ever wantoned, suddenly disrobed of all colour, and so much light only left as to spread a dim leaden sombreness over mountains grey with ashen rocks, and fields pallid with undistinguished vegetation ; and you will understand what a feast of beauty God is constantly spreading before us, by the instrumentality of that little organ the eye. If there be anything positively good in nature, and entirely independent of the caprice of individual opinion, it is light ; and as to colour, though children and uncultivated persons run after gay hues (which, indeed, have a natural preference to dull ones), and fashion also here plays various wild freaks, yet there can be no doubt that the highest enjoyment from this source, is like the pleasure we derive from good music, not merely sensuous, but intellectual, and depends upon essential harmonious ratios, and upon congruity. With respect to simple colours, it admits of no doubt that, when used in the fine arts, their virtue, like the virtue of all other things, consists in their energy, purity, and distinctness ; their energy, so long always as it does not overpower the capacity of the recipient—their purity, in that the colour shall not have its native character destroyed by the admixture of foreign and counter-acting elements—their distinctness, which depends mainly on their relation to neighbouring colours, and to circumambient shade or brightness. For in this world it is impossible for anything to stand altogether alone ; so that, even when we have only one colour to deal with, we cannot proceed, as if that colour could come upon the eye in a state of perfect isolation

from its environment. But the harmony of colour in grand composition is a matter of more delicate adjustment, full of beautiful mysteries, which reveal themselves gradually only to the eye of the practised artist; with regard to which I would remark here only two things: *first*, that I believe scientific men have found that this nice management of visual hues depends, to a certain extent, on measurable relations similar to those which are universally acknowledged in the science of acoustics; and again, that it rests, in a very great degree, on the principles of gradation and contrast, of which I shall have occasion to speak more particularly in the third discourse.

If I were now to sum up all that has been said in illustration of the proposition, that man, as a real being, necessarily prefers reality to negation, and a high power of reality to a lower power, I might use a phrase, which has been used by other writers, from Plato downwards,¹ to signify the essence of the Beautiful—I mean **PERFECTION**. This phrase has been objected to because it does not define wherein perfection consists; but if the lazy reader will only take the trouble to think for himself for a single moment, he will discover that perfection means mainly what we have been talking about in reference to the present proposition; and if he grants the substantial beauty of the detailed illustrations adduced, he can have no difficulty in saying

¹ Ἀτελεῖ γὰρ εἰκότος οὐδὲν ποτ' ἂν γένοιτο καλόν.—*Timæus*, 30, C. Τὸ σύμμετρον καὶ καλὸν καὶ τὸ τέλειον.—*Philebus*, 66, B. So among the moderns, FERGUSON, and PATTERSON in *BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE*, December 1853, who says, 'A beautiful object or emotion is neither more nor less than an object or emotion PERFECT IN ITS KIND, tried by a standard innate in the soul.'

that beauty consists in perfection. No doubt, in one sense, an object, to be perfectly beautiful, implies the combination of every element of beauty, some of which have not yet been mentioned ; but in a more restricted sense, that object may be called both beautiful and perfect, which gives a free, full, and vigorous utterance to the particular virtue which is in it, according to the law of order and congruity, which governs all high existence. In whatever case, therefore, Nature has thoroughly worked out (*perfacio*, to do thoroughly) her idea in the creation of any object or creature, that result of her creative energy is perfect, and also beautiful. But as recent morphologic science has taught us that there are rudimentary organs in certain animals which have not attained to development in these animals, but only point to perfect growth in some other more highly organised creatures ; so there are no doubt animals, representing a transition stage between a higher and a lower type, which are imperfect when contrasted with the more beautiful types out of which they grew, and into which they pass ; for every transition state is incomplete, and therefore makes no total and satisfactory impression. We see this plainly in the development of the human individual. A chubby child in good health is always pleasing ; and so is an unaffected hilarious boy, a harmoniously compacted manhood, and a ripe mellow old age ; but that transition stage of human life, when the eager youth, appears with his foot entangled in the meshes of puerility, and his hand stretching hastily forward to the listed field of manhood, is never beautiful, always ludicrous : the incongruity between the grandeur of what the creature would be, and the littleness of what he must be, is

too glaring. We shall say, then, that imperfection is a very common thing in this world amongst men and megatheria; but the human imagination not being confined to what is, but being free to revel in the infinite region of possibility, and being seldom in a condition to satisfy its insatiate longings with the loveliness of actually existing things, betakes itself to the creation of imaginary worlds, containing a union of all imaginary perfections; and thus is generated the IDEAL in permanent opposition to the REAL, and the ARTISTIC becomes by no means identical with the NATURAL. Herein lies a great mystery, which philosophers and theologians of all ages have devoutly looked into not without perplexity; but for me it is enough to state the fact, that we live in a world manifestly inspired by the living soul of beauty, but where perfect beauty is not always attained. Indeed, it is difficult to see, in many cases, how it could have been attained consistently with the creation of a world of which the most multitudinous finitude, and the most diversified expression was to be the principle. I am not one of those, however, who think myself bound to explain everything, much less that most difficult of all things, the origin of evil and the philosophy of ugliness. I see not a few things, indeed, which are vulgarly called evil, that are manifestly either good relatively to some part of creation of which I am not the centre, or which are at least the cause of much good, that, so far as my insight goes, could not have been produced in any other way; and I may presume that many things in the world, which appear ugly to me from my point of view, find their propriety in that large scheme of things which human intellect can never

measure.¹ Still, there are certain things in the world of which it were mere sophistry to attempt explaining away the hideousness. Disease is ugly; death is ugly;² and the first of May in Scotland, full of East wind and drizzly mist, is not beautiful. The actual fact, therefore, of Nature, in each individual case, is not that which the artist is called upon to imitate. The normal type of Nature; her general character and aim; her regulative pattern, or *ἰδέα*, as Plato called it; the *ideal* form of comely proportion 'seen by her feeling eye, and felt by her shaping hand,'³—after this model he must work, with reverential fidelity and with joy, proud that he also, like the Apostle Paul, may, in his own sphere, assume the most honourable title that belongs to any mortal man,—‘A FELLOW-WORKER WITH GOD.’ The ideal, therefore, is the aim of the true artist; and he who has not comprehension enough to see the cha-

¹ Every *part* is necessarily imperfect; its perfection lying in the whole, as Cicero says of man, ‘*Homo nullo modo perfectus, sed quaedam particula perfecti.*’—*De Nat. Deorum*, ii. 14.

² ‘For which reason,’ as Mr Ruskin remarks, ‘in a monumental work, the sculptor should not convey the impression of a corpse, nor of sick and outworn flesh, but he should place before the spectator only a marble image of death or weariness.’—*Modern Painters*, vol. ii., on REPOSE—On which principle, the best commentary that I know is to be found in the figures of the late King and Queen of Prussia, by RAUCH, in their monument at Charlottenburg; decidedly the most heavenly representation of death in marble that my eyes ever beheld; and I have seen it three or four times always with increased satisfaction.

³ ‘By Nature,’ says FUSELI (Lecture I., *Works* by KNOWLES, vol. ii., p. 21), ‘I understand the general and permanent principles of visible objects, not disfigured by accident or distempered by disease, not modified by fashion or local habit.’ The same original genius is reported to have said, ‘*D—mn Nature—she always puts me out!*’ (Cunningham’s *Lives*, ii., 304). Such honesty is worth a thousand fine sentences.

racteristic types of nature in their most characteristic moments, may confine his activity to the sign-board, and paint a golden sun, or a pot of beer to invite the thirsty wayfarer to a place of refreshment. Such occupation may be useful, but it is not called beautiful : it is not a fine art. Ideals, however, are by no means so rare as some people, by their way of talking, would represent them. Anything may be idealised, even a pot of beer ; as, indeed, I remember to have seen this finely managed in a very appropriate place, the Picture-Gallery in the beer-drinking metropolis of Bavaria.¹ It is not with the untangible *αἰὲρ καὶ αἰθέρ*, the remote and abstract *τὸ ἀγαθόν* of Plato, that a painter has to do. His ideals are of the most concrete description sometimes, and are not ashamed of the most vulgar garb. There is an ideal (which Landseer knows) of a dog as well as of a man, of a beggar as well as of a king, of a blind fiddler, no less than of Julius Cæsar. Poetry also can delight in these ideals :—

‘ Wee stuffy, stumpy, dumpy laddie,
Thou urchin-elfin, bare and duddy,
Thy plumpit kite an’ cheek sae ruddy,
Are fairly baggit,
Although the breckums on thy body
Are e’en right raggit!’

Plainly such vulgar things as rags and filth have their ideal ; as the canvass of Murillo, and the page of Ballantine, sufficiently testify ; so that we may re-

¹ I allude to a small picture in the New Gallery, of which a mug of beer in the centre forms the subject ; enveloped, however, in a sort of fine gauzy mist, through which a number of pleasant fantastic faces are seen peering, in a way that seems significantly to embody the operations of a German’s brain, when sipping his favourite liquor, and puffing his beloved narcotic blast.

create, and even elevate our fancy, not with severe Greek gods always, and serene Romish saints, but sometimes also with common and very imperfect creatures, of whom, just because they cross our path frequently, it is of great consequence that we should be able to make some profitable application. The principle on which this depends is well worthy of attention. All healthy existence, in however low a scale, and however destitute of the higher elements of beauty, and denuded of all elegant embellishment, brings with it the happy feeling of vital comfort, which can never be expressed without conveying a certain impression of essential beauty. A dark Neapolitan Lazzaroni, lying lazily on his back in the sun, is not an Adonis certainly, nor an Apollo; but he is a happy creature, and he is enjoying himself in his own easy Neapolitan way: if you look at him, you will receive the impress of a certain rude ungarnished comeliness: if you paint him, disposing your lights and shadows cunningly, and knowing how to use the deep and rich colour such a subject requires, you may excite great and well-deserved admiration. But there is something more, unquestionably, in the very pleasing effect which a beggar boy, well painted by Murillo, or even a stolid swine-herd by Morland, may produce. There is not only the image, skilfully set before the mind's eye, of a natural unaffected creature, free from the incongruities which a false over-culture so often induces, but there is a triumph of Nature's mighty internal force above the paraphernalia of pompous external circumstance by which she is often oppressed: we recognise with joy that the essential beautiful vitality of a fellow-creature is so grace-

fully independent of the dress which he wears and the stage on which he acts. Thus we console ourselves for the rare appearance of the loftiest ideal of beauty, by the study of its commonest modifications in the lowest; and we are content that many things in the world should be less perfect, in order that the world, as a whole, may be more various. And thus, in art and in life, we learn that great lesson of practical wisdom, while we look upward to the stars, not to trample on the flowers that lie at our feet.

So much for the Real and the Ideal in their general relationship and antagonism. I will now make a few remarks on a subject, on the brink of which the reader must have felt himself more than once in the course of these lucubrations,—I mean the **SUBLIME**. We were on the borders of that doctrine when we talked of magnitude. ‘It is quantity,’ says Hogarth, ‘that adds greatness to grace;’ and it is greatness, we all know, which, when it has reached a certain pitch, becomes sublime. This, therefore, is a matter always of relation to the position and the capability of the recipient. A beautiful crystal is beautiful to everybody, to a man as well as to a child, to a god no less than to a man; but many a spectacle that is grand and full of a splendid awe to a little boy, will be only pretty to a grown man. The books that are sublime to a child, are often trifling to an adult; the authors who reign with an undisputed sway over the youth of sixteen, can often command only a friendly nod of recognition from the veteran thinker of sixty. For why? Not the object, but the position and the capacity of the spectator is changed. To a man at the bottom of a high mountain, the far-discerned peak is the focus of

sublimity ; to the same man, when he stands upon the peak, the landscape at his feet is sublime, the far-stretching forests, and the far-winding rivers, whose silvery lines lose themselves in the shining of the sun which they reflect. The Sublime is, therefore, altogether a relative matter ; and though, in extreme cases, it may be often contrasted with the Beautiful, the cases are more frequent in nature, and certainly more grateful, where the two ideas are wedded into one ; or where the elements of the Beautiful, which a striking object may contain, have superadded to them the idea of POWER to such an extent as to overwhelm and overawe the spectator. But that the Sublime alone, unmitigated by any element of beauty, is not a proper object of art, will be manifest to any one who will remove from Glencoe, or any other awe-inspiring mountain scenery, every element of a soothing and pleasant nature that is generally found combined with the wildest landscape. The silver thread of the wandering waterfall, the nodding plumes of the solitary birch tree, the gleam of light through the dark rocky chasm, the pleasant murmur of the lonely mountain river, the smoke upwreathing from the solitary shieling,—all these are points of pure beauty, which calm and soothe the soul amid what is called the ‘savage grandeur’ of the scene. Were it purely savage, it would be pleasing only to a savage mind, and to a diseased imagination, to which mere horror and terror had become necessary stimulants. Healthy nature does not deal in horrors ; and healthy art, following her example, can use the element of Power, not to stimulate inert languor by the presentation of something terrible, but to raise the soul from what is

trivial by the environment of what is great. Even the tempered sublime, in fact, cannot be the habitual atmosphere of a healthy human life. It is beauty that must be our daily food : sublimity only our occasional banquet. Therefore, when any object naturally sublime is constantly presented to our eye, it is so enrobed in beauty, that the feeling of awe, with which it might otherwise overwhelm us, is moderated into love. The sea in a storm, for instance, is purely sublime ; every physical force here is presented at that pitch of energy which could not be long contemplated without destroying the harmonious equanimity on which a healthy intellectual state depends.¹ But the sea is not always stormy : it is more frequently calm ; and in this case the sublimity which always belongs to the mere vastitude of its shapeless expanse, is so tempered by the play of beautiful colour upon its surface, by the graceful undulation of its liquid masses, and the musical curl of its breaking foam, that we are freed altogether from the impression of overpowering awe when we contemplate it ; and poets can, without offence, compare the most terrible force in Nature to a cradled child. The following exordium of a well-known poem is an admirable instance of how cunningly beauty may be wedded to sublimity, so that beautiful, rather than sublime, shall be the word used

¹ Hence poets may indulge in the representation of horrible scenes with which painters may not meddle ; for the page of the poet is quickly turned over, but the painter's canvass remains. Nay, such is the difference in this respect between the two arts, that many of the horrors in Dante's *Inferno* become even ridiculous when represented by the draughtsman. Let illustrators consider this. On the limits of poetry and painting there is no book preferable to 'LESSING'S LAOCOON.'

to express the collective emotion, though there can be no question that elements of very great sublimity are involved in these simple lines :—

‘ How beautiful is Night !
 A dewy freshness fills the silent air,
 No mist obscures, no little cloud
 Breaks the serene of heaven :
 In full-orb'd glory, the majestic moon
 Rolls through the dark blue depths.
 Beneath her steady ray
 The desert circle spreads,
 Like the round ocean girdled with the sky :
 How beautiful is Night !’

It is, indeed, one of the great secrets of high talent in every department of art, so to present the sublime—a powerful form or force—to the imagination, as that the natural element of power thereto belonging shall be softened into beauty ; and the successful display of this lofty faculty produces what we call *repose*. LET THERE BE LIGHT ; and THERE WAS LIGHT : This famous sentence, so often quoted and commented on by æsthetical writers, is sublime for other reasons, but chiefly for this, that it indicates the presence of infinite power with the smallest possible expression of artistic force in the expression of that power ; the most sublime energy is revealed to us, clad with all the calmness of the simplest beauty. Poets who do not understand this modesty of Nature in her greatest exhibitions of power, but must always be saying things strikingly sublime, may rest assured that they will never be extensively read. The energy which protrudes itself with forward vehemence, always creates a certain amount of discomfort ; but what

men want in art, as in nature, along with, and before all other things, is enjoyment.¹

There is one important element in the Sublime to which, in conclusion, we may direct special attention. This element is the INFINITE. If any amount of greatness, beyond what we are accustomed to, conveys to us an impression which is either sublime, or contains the germ of what, by mere quantitative increase, may become sublime, much more is that deserving of the epithet, whose greatness transcends all calculation, and covers the most gigantic of human intellects with confusion. Hence the sublimity of everything that, though it may not be actually infinite, evades all measurement by the imagination, and defies the comprehensive power of the most masterly eye. Hence the sublimity of mere dimness and darkness; not because darkness is in itself sublime (for it is a thing essentially hideous and abhorrent to all creatures that look upon the light), but because it prevents tangibility and measurement; in its presence the intellect, which works through vision, cannot exercise its usual command over the external world; and in proportion as its capacity to act is diminished, its liability to be acted on is increased; and it is acted on by its own workings in the first place, and by a secret sense of an all-present, all-embracing power, in the second place; that is, GOD. Hence the sublimity of irregularity in certain cases; not because (as we formerly showed) any reasonable mind can habitually delight in mere disorder and disproportion, but because other elements of beauty are

¹ On *repose* in art, RUSKIN has a fine chapter in his second volume. He says, 'Repose demands for its expression the implicit capability of its opposite energy.'

present; as colour, for instance, and the finely varied play of the visible and invisible elemental forces; and the whole environment of mighty Nature tends to produce in a healthy mind a deep impression of the greatness of GOD, and the littleness of man. In such circumstances, the element of symmetry, which enables the mind to feel its own mastery, would disturb the unity of feeling in the mind of the spectator, and, therefore, is happily not present. No man ever desired symmetry in the solitude of Glenrosa—ever wished that the irregular hanging mountains, amid which the beautiful Gulf of Corinth insinuates its winding tongues, should change themselves into regularly marshalled cones and cylinders for the recreation of a mathematician with his angleometer. (We see here, as in many other cases, the hopelessness of attempting to explain the influences of nature and the action of the human soul by any single principle, however comprehensive.) We started in the present inquiry by asserting the extensive dominancy of the primal principle of Order, to which the Infinite is an offence;¹ so extensive, that the world appeared plainly to be a cosmos, and not a chaos, merely by virtue of this principle. Nevertheless we have now found its counter-

¹ Τὸ γὰρ κακὸν τοῦ ἀπείρου, ὡς οἱ Πυθαγόρειοι εἰκάζον, τὸ δὲ ἀγαθὸν τοῦ πεπερασμένου.—ARISTOTLE, *Ethic. Nicom.*, ii. 6, 14; which doctrine is fully expounded by PLATO, in the *Philebus*. This doctrine is necessarily true with regard to all action and execution. Every special deed is a limitation of a capacity that before the deed contained infinite possibilities. A man may have an infinite number of ideās in his head; but when he acts, he chooses one, and exhibits a finite result. In the same way, passions and desires are infinite; but they are made finite by the choice of a wisely moderated course of action.

part; for certain purposes and effects, Nature plainly delights in irregularity; and, so far as we can see, could produce the same effect by no other means. Nor is this strange. For man, though a finite being, and working only in finite fields, is atmospherized in the infinite. As sailors at sea, who have the command of the little ship in which they sail, but no control over the mighty tides through which they make their voyage, so man, among a thousand petty finitudes, is constantly sailing through an ocean of infinitude; infinitude of divinely-regulated existence without, infinitude of divinely-moved imaginations within; and this double element, of finitude and infinitude must constantly receive, from nature and from art, each its appropriate nourishment, if a fully-developed and harmonious type of humanity is to be maintained. But so narrow are we in our sympathies, and so careless to cultivate the whole mass of our capabilities, that many persons are to be found who are only alive in the one-half of their human nature, and to whom everything connected with the other is an offence. To some, the Finite, the bounded, the clear, orderly, well-marshalled and thoroughly-calculated, is the only element of vital delight. These are statistical souls, whose understanding would rejoice more in numbering the individual peaks of the Alps, than their imagination is impressed by their colossal totality. To others, a luxurious floating in a misty sea of unbounded emotion is the only ecstasy of which life is capable; and a single streak of light in the far distance of a dark horizon will stir in their fancy more pleasurable emotions than all the pillared pomp of Pentelic marble, which the architectural skill of Ictinus piled up in

honour of the blue-eyed goddess of the Athenian Acropolis. Such persons cannot read Homer because he is clear; and delight in the elaborately-twisted sorrow of Tennyson's *In Memoriam*, chiefly where it is most artificial, and most unintelligible. So various and so contrary are the rich capacities of God's creatures; and so readily does every finite thing, by refusing to acknowledge what is contradictory to its own type, fall into an idol-worship of its own peculiarities.

There is one region, however—and with this remark we conclude—in which a man may legitimately cultivate his sense of the Infinite without so much danger of falling into the ludicrous—and that is RELIGION. No doubt, here also all sort of imaginative monsters and mystical abortions are possible, and have been recorded; but in this region these extravagancies are more pardonable, partly because they are more natural, partly because they have been produced, not by too exclusive a contemplation of the Infinite, but by an inconsiderate admixture of the Finite. Men will incarnate the infinite GOD in forms of finite wood, and stone, and baked bread, and logical formulas, which are not much better. Hence a mystery arises, not from those dark clouds which must ever encircle the throne of the Infinite to the chaste finite eye, but from that troubled dust which is raised by the restlessness of an impertinent understanding. In the undisturbed element of pure religion, however, any healthy intellect will naturally find the circumambient sublime of a paternal GOD, throwing its protective awe round the beauty of a child-like humanity; and from such religion only can the highest aspirations of the true artist drink in perfect satisfaction. The opposition between re-

ligion and art, alluded to in the previous discourse, and so characteristic of this country, is the phenomenon of a transition period, which we shall piously hope is fast passing away. Never is piety more unwise than when she casts beauty out of the Church, and by this excommunication forces her fairest sister to become profane. It is the duty of religion not to eject, but to cherish and seek fellowship, with every beautiful exhibition which delights, and every delicate art which embellishes human life. So, on the other hand, it is the duty of art not to waste its high capabilities in the imitation of what is trivial, and in the curious adornment of what has only a finite significance. The highest art is always the most religious; and the greatest artist is always a devout man. A scoffing Raphael or Michael Angelo is not conceivable.

DISCOURSE THE THIRD.

IN the present discourse, I shall endeavour to complete the classification of those principles of eternal and immutable beauty, the operation of which is most frequent and most observable in the cunning framework of the universe, and in the imitative exhibitions of human art. I do not pretend that my catalogue is exhaustive; for I am not writing a systematic treatise on the Beautiful, but only indicating the principal nuclei of crystallisation round which such a treatise might be massed. Nature, though one in her essence, and simple in her plan, is various in her aspects; and though some of the points on which I am now going to touch may seem to be involved in what has been already said, they do not the less necessarily demand a separate treatment, as their omission or misapprehension has often caused no small amount of confusion. The next principle on which I have to make a few remarks, is

EXPRESSIVENESS, OR EXPRESSION.

IN the world, we find everywhere an inward exercise of forces, and an outward exhibition of those forces. Altogether free from forces is no part of the universe that I know; for even the inert masses of

matter, as they are called, are kept together by certain powers acting towards a common centre, and producing, so long as this action is not interrupted by other centrifugal forces, a certain statical equilibrium, stability, or repose. Altogether free from exhibition, also, is no force of which human nature is cognisant; for, though the breezes of heaven are not apprehended by our eyes, the common organ by which outward exhibitions are admitted to the sensory, yet that the moving air is something, we know by its effects on the solid world, and specially also on the ear, which is the organ that takes cognisance of pulsations of the atmospheric fluid. That grand internal force which we call MIND, never acts without a material organ. If passion stirs the soul, the heart beats; if thoughts agitate it, the brain is burdened; if delicate emotion thrills it, the eye swells and the lip dilates. Now, all these sensuous exhibitions of unseen forces are the outward expressions of those forces, varying according to their degree of intensity or other modifying power; and between these forces and the fashion of their outward exhibition, there is a direct and necessary connection, similar to that which exists between a man's will and his actions, or between a parent who begets, and the offspring which is begotten. Everything that exists has its natural inherent expression,—an expression in no wise arbitrary, or capable of being otherwise than it is, but, so far as we can see, not merely the constant and permanent, but the unavoidable and necessary manifestation of the inward dynamical virtue, which is the soul of its outward semblance. Thus, the face of a young and healthy person is finely rounded, and nicely filled up with a full and ruddy vitality; while that of an old man is

angular and dry, and the skin, once round and blooming, is puckered into ungraceful folds. Why is this? Not because the will of GOD would have it so, as some pious persons might be prone to answer, but because the will of GOD, being a reasonable and a congruous will, could not have it otherwise. A full and well-rounded fleshly presentation is the natural and only effective exhibition of a full and exuberant vital force, while a wrinkled skin and angularly protruded bones are the no less natural and effective exhibition of diminished vital powers and meagre juices. The connection, therefore, between different periods of life and the fashions of their outward expression, is a natural and necessary one, and possesses an inherent significance, which no mere association of ideas in the mind of any fanciful individual can either create or destroy.¹ It belongs to the order of nature, and to that finely-balanced system of significance between the inward forces and the outward shows of all existence, by means of which an expressive and cognisable world is made possible; and we have no more right to imagine this order of things reversed, than to suppose that the planets might leap by lawless whim from their calculated courses, or the seed of an oak, when planted, grow into a gooseberry bush. On the supposition that a significant and appreciable world is to exist, I can, in fact, no more imagine that strong internal forces should be expressed by weak external exhibitions, than that two and two should make three; for if such a state of things were possible, it could only be in a world of absolute

¹ Contrast what is said on this point by Jeffrey, in his article, *Beauty*, in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

incongruity and unreason, which could be no object of reasonable cognition and appreciation.

Let us take a few examples of the manner in which the principle of expression acts in nature. Most people may have seen a blacksmith's arm. It presents an aspect considerably different from the arm of a student, who never handles any tool more potent than a pen or a cigar, an umbrella or a walking-stick. Why is this? Plainly because an immense quantity of vital force having been expended through the arm of the artificer, nature gives expression to this by a corresponding quantity of fleshy development in that organ. In other words, quantity is the natural index of power, and thus becomes, as we saw in the previous discourse, one of the natural producers of the Sublime. For the force that raised the bulging muscle on the arm of the strong hammerman, has produced this effect precisely on the same principle, and according to the same law, by which terrible subterranean commotions, in the antediluvian ages of the world, raised up towards heaven those immense piles of curiously molten masses which we now call mountains. Mountains are sublime, because they express power. The Farnesian Hercules is sublime exactly in the same way; for even in the repose of those drooping masses of heavy muscle, the untameable vigour that produced them is fully discerned. So the ample forehead of a great thinker expresses great thought. Why?—because a great brain is the natural and necessary exponent of great thinking;¹ and long before Cuvier and Owen

¹ The error of our phrenologists did not lie in recognising the great importance of the brain as an organ of mental expression, but in supposing that there was no other index of spiritual power than

had, from grounds of comparative anatomy, showed the necessary correlation of mass of brain and mass of thought, Homer had represented his demagogue with a sharply-slanting cranium (*φοξὸς ἔην κεφαλήν*), and Shakespeare had painted his ideal of a base character with a 'forehead villanously low.' But it is not outward quantity only by which nature expresses the activity of her internal forces. Every line of the face is expressive, as the painter well knows; and human beauty may be mapped out by a series of artistical strokes, as accurately as a district of country may be surveyed by the triangles of the mathematician. Why are big blubbery lips not beautiful? Simply because there is no high human quality, no profundity of cogitation, no delicacy of emotion, no heroism in character, of which the labial organ largely protruded is the natural and necessary expression. Why is a big mouth ugly? Not only because it divides the oval unity of the head with an unseemly cleft into two, but also, and specially, because the mouth, as a mere opening, is not and cannot be, in such a lofty creature as man, a noble feature: it expresses only our lowest and most corporeal necessities; it declares our weak-

the mere mass and form of that organ; and, further, in the conceit that there was no complete philosophy of the human mind possible, without the knowledge of the particular sections of the human skull, which from principles purely empirical they had been in haste to make out. Clocks and watches are very convenient things when they are well made; but the hour of the day may be known to an eye well-trained in practical astronomy without them. So it is with the phrenological organs; if true, they may be useful enough to curious people; but the profounder philosophy of the human soul always was known, and ever will be known to those who seek it, without the indications of any such intellectual dial-plate.

ness, not our strength; therefore, in the ideal of man, it belongs as much to the inherent law of the due expression and effective manifestation of things, that this organ be small, as that the more intellectual organ, the brain, should be large. In these two cases, therefore, the law of quantity is reversed, and gives place to a higher congruity, which requires that the expression of mere mass in certain organs should be weak. In the same way, it will be found that the gathering up of certain muscles in the face under the influence of certain passions, the fixation of certain lines by the constant action of peevishness and other permanent evil affections, and the pleasant relaxation of certain muscles under the influence of joy and benevolent affections, are the necessary result of certain moral forces of the soul, acting through a certain material medium of expression, and are as deeply rooted in the unalterable nature of things as any, the most simple, mechanical law in the creation. Given two bodies impelled by certain forces in different directions, and let a collision take place: the mathematician can calculate exactly what will be the amount and the direction of the new force generated by the concussion. Exactly so; given a soul with certain natural faculties and passions, and a body with certain organs: the mental forces acting within will exhibit themselves in certain fixed external features, making the same invariable impression on every spectator, so long as he enjoys his normal measure of impressibility. This measure, of course, may be disturbed; but if disturbed (as in the case of a congenital malformation and defect,¹

¹ Of congenital defect in the region of æsthetical science, the well-known instance of *colour-blindness* may be stated, concerning

or superinduced mutilation), affects only the individual creature, who perishes, not the general order of creation which remains.

I will now make a few remarks on that grand organ of human expression, viz., LANGUAGE. If there were anything arbitrary in that rich domain of well harmonised and expressive forces by which we are surrounded, and of which we are a part, a first glance certainly would lead us to expect that we should find it in that system of articulate sounds which man uses as the pliable and plastic symbols of his multifarious and curiously interwoven conceptions and emotions. What connection is there between the word MOON, for instance, and the round silvery orb which we call a satellite of our earth, and the ancient Greeks believed to be a goddess of Olympus? Nothing certainly, or very little, as the sign now stands in our English tongue; from which, however, as a motley conglomerate, that has been tumbled into its present shape by all sorts of collisions and attractions, transmutations and aggregations, no scientific argument can be drawn with regard to the original significancy or arbitrariness of the original language of the human race. Independently of all experience, a profound thinker could argue,¹ that, as there is nothing arbitrary in nature, so there can be nothing arbitrary in human speech,

which, the ingenious works of Professor George Wilson may be consulted. Lord Jeffrey, from such abnormal instances, would have argued, quite legitimately in his sophistical way, that the whole theory of the harmony of colours, on which a notable part of the art of painting depends, has no foundation in nature, but depends on the subjective associations and arbitrary capacities of vision in each individual; so perverse is the logic of scepticism.

¹ PLATO, in the *Cratylus*.

which is only one of the many-faced expressions of natural force; and what his harmonious mind thus sublimely guessed, two thousand years ago, the exact analysis, and the grandly systematised comparison of the German scholars, is now able demonstrably to prove. True, we cannot point out a special significance and propriety in all the derivative applications of simple and compound words, such as we find them in the composite mass of any spoken language; but there are indications in every existing language, on whose vocal coinage the original stamp is at all legible, sufficient to prove that all human speech is the necessary creation of a God-implanted force in the rational soul, whereby it struggles to give expression to the emotions by which it is agitated, through the medium of the all-permeant atmosphere in which it is enveloped. An interjection, for instance, to commence with those elements of language which we have in common with the brutes, is not at all an arbitrary utterance; and the simple vowel sounds from the broad, deep A to the thin and slender Iota, whether emitted with a short and rapid motion of the breath, or dilated and prolonged so as to form what are called long syllables in prosody, have all their natural and necessary significance as the expressions of an impulse of vitality in the creatures that make the utterance strong or weak, quick and sudden, or slow and protracted, as the case may be. It is not an arbitrary thing, for instance, that the slow-drawn, painful emotion, which is expressed by the monosyllable *moan* in English, finds its Greek counterpart in the three long syllables of *διμωγή*: these words, indeed, are not the same, but so far as their power of expressing the

thing signified is concerned, they are identical. No being existing in a world, where evolutions of variously modified sound were to be a medium of intelligent expression, could ever have expressed the emotions of which these words are significant, by syllables composed of vocal elements altogether different. A groan never has, and never could be, expressed in any reasonable language, by such words as *birr*, *whirr*, *trig*, *limp*, *snip*, and such like. All language, in its original form, was an expressive utterance, either from internal impulses, immediately agitating the utterer, or from external influences, acting upon his nervous impressibility, and moving him mediately to vocal demonstrations of the same kind. In this latter case, the vocal utterance was very often a simple dramatic imitation of the impressing power from without, if it happened to be a sound, as in the words *murmur*, *cuckoo*, *mugio*, κρώζω, and whole groups of words in the native Saxon element of our English tongue. Any person, indeed, who makes even a superficial examination of the vocal contents of any language, ancient or modern—let it be Hebrew, or let it be English—will have no difficulty in arriving at the conclusion, that to suppose the meaning of all the most expressive words inverted, so that βροντᾶν, for instance, should exchange meanings with κίττιζω, roar with *whimper*, scream with *giggle*, and so forth, would be to suppose an absurdity of which language, as the creation of a reasonable being, is incapable. For, if even among brute creatures we cannot conceive, as consistent with the nature of things, such an incongruity as that of a lion giving vent to its lusty wrath in the timorous pipings of a wren ; or a wren holding

vernal colloquies with its mate, in the deep-mouthed harsh-throated roar that fills the savage forest with awe; much less can we conceive, that in the vocal utterances of a reasoning creature like man, the words of primeval language could be anything else than the nearest possible approach to a perfect congruity between the thing signified and the breath, modified by emission for the very purpose of making it significant. Even at the present distant date, when the current material of language has been so much broken down from its original expressiveness, it is quite plain, according to the very obvious instances just adduced, that a very great part of this inherent significance in our organism of articulate utterance still remains; and it is one great part of the art of poetry, so to order a well-measured and scientifically chosen procession of articulate sounds, as that the spoken word may be everywhere, both by its character and position, in the highest degree significant of the sense, and the verse, in every case as much as may be a dramatic expression of the emotion. And this, although it may be an art, is, in relation to the nice instinct of the thoroughly cultivated poet, just as necessary a part of the great exhibitivè process of plastic nature, as the sweet note of the cuckoo in spring time, or the fierce war-song of the savage on the battle field.¹

¹ DR THOMAS BROWN, in his fifty-fifth lecture, having expressed himself to the effect, that 'there is certainly no valid ground of disbelief, that there are at least some natural signs, independent of experience, and equally universal in use and in interpretation' (which is just the doctrine of my text, only that I say it decidedly, and as a matter of scientific certainty); the present seems to me a fitting place for stating shortly the peculiar position of that philosopher, with regard to the principles of æsthe-

The language of symbols, so largely used in the imaginative religions of all primitive peoples, is another example of natural expression, which may, indeed, sometimes be fanciful, but, in the general case, has a very obvious and a very natural significance, being, in fact, often founded on some natural organ of expression, belonging to some striking object, and applied to every other object, where a similar natural power is felt to be at work. Arrows, for instance, are the expression of a force in the arm of an archer, which, being exerted suddenly in connection with the tical philosophy. Dr Brown seems to have been an extremely amiable and ingenious man, and a very fluent and graceful writer, with a most useful talent—to a lecturer—of spreading a small wealth of ideas, by copious illustration, over the greatest possible breadth of professorial pages. His emotional instincts, also, were more warm and genial than those of Alison and Jeffrey; and he was less apt to surrender his allegiance to his heart at the call of a mere theory of the understanding, however cunning. He was a poet besides, at least a cultivator of verse; and, professing philosophy, ought to have spoken wisely on the principles of beauty. Nevertheless, in reference to all the higher qualities that should belong to an æsthetical philosopher, he possesses no more substantial weight than those two sceptical writers just named. What he urges against them, though ingenious and true, is brought forward with such an uncertain air, and advanced with such an innocent toleration of the fundamental fallacy of his adversaries, that no serious reader feels inclined to venture anything for a cause which its ingenious advocate leaves floating in the air, with only the consistency of a beautiful cloud that may, perhaps, be something more than a cloud. He tells us again, and again, as indeed he has a trick of ‘damnable iteration,’ most unworthy of a philosopher, that his whole doctrine of beautiful emotions is only “a comparison of probabilities,” and that his best arguments offered only “a presumption that all beauty is not wholly contingent.” Such a weak affirmation was not calculated to cure the souls of his hearers of any sceptical disease under which they might have been labouring. Jeffrey and Alison were quite decided in their negations; and the public naturally followed the trumpeter who blew his shell with

elastic power of a bent bow, causes the light, winged reed, to shoot through the air quickly in a straight line. In pictorial language, accordingly, such as is used not only by all semi-civilized nations, but also by all poets, the arrow may be used to express any sudden, direct, and quick motion, by which a body is sent with calculated speed from one point to another ; a process of mental transference and adaptation, identically the same, as all philologists know, with the process by which articulate language is formed and grows. In the same way, a hammer in the hand of a smith, is as much the natural expression of the force

the most decided note of anticipated victory. The fundamental mistake in Brown's philosophy of Beauty, lies in the analogy which he draws between what the philosophers of the Lockian school call the secondary qualities of matter, and the quality of beauty in objects. As colour is a mere subjective *sensation* existing in the mind, not in the coloured object, so beauty is a subjective *emotion* of the same kind. Beauty exists only in the mind of the beholder, there is 'no fixed essence of the τὸ καλόν;' the whole doctrine of beauty is a doctrine of 'transient feelings.' However elegantly the writer who thus expresses himself, may give fence to Alison on a few minor points, he maintains fundamentally the same principles of æsthetical scepticism. 'Every man, the measure to himself of his own sensations and his own feelings,' according to the famous old Abderite Protagoras ; this is practically the upshot of Brown's doctrine, as well as of Alison's and Jeffrey's. The way to deal with such a sophism is to deny the false analogy on which it is based. It is not true even with regard to colour, or any so-called secondary quality of matter, that it exists wholly in the mind. Colour exists neither in the eye nor in the object, but is an original vital action generated between the two, of which light, a primary cosmic power, is the medium. So beauty, as we commonly use the word, exists neither in the object contemplated, nor in the person contemplating, but is an original perception and emotional action necessarily produced, when a soul of a certain quality, and an object radiant with the same quality, are brought into mutual action. It is, however, perfectly easy to conceive a beautiful world

used by him, as the strong muscle on his arm ; for it is the nature of a reasonable being to use tools, and the arm, strictly speaking, is as much a tool to the will of a man, as the hammer is to his arm. Transfer this hammer into the hands of a god, say Thor, the god of thunder, and it immediately becomes the symbol of almighty power. So with all other symbols. They are only the natural organs or instruments of expression, transferred from one agent to another, or from a striking individual case, to the general principle on which that and all kindred cases depend. In symbols, therefore, there is nothing arbitrary, any more than in language. The

without the existence of a single percipient of its beauty. God might have shaped forth from all eternity His own necessary ideas of order and congruity, without creating any human or angelic beings to contemplate it. The beauty of a sculptor's models, does not in the least depend upon the fact, that numbers of curious visitors flock to his atelier, to be delighted with his work. It depends upon the inherent plastic harmonies of his soul, and upon nothing else. But, not to press this, it is plain that the wavering uncertainty of the subjective theory of Brown disappears the moment we look the fundamental fact of all metaphysics, in the face, that there is no such thing as mere subjectivity in the world ; that every mental fact is merely the other pole of a material fact ; and that this material fact, is merely the outer face of the one primary mental fact, on which all facts depend, viz., God. The primary laws of thought and feeling in man, are merely the highest expressions of mental action in the universe, and can never be in contradiction to the essential nature of the Cause of that universe, of which they are a part. Individual feelings are no law, either of beauty or morals ; but universal feelings are divine facts. The objective value of all human emotion depends on this, that nothing human can ever shake itself altogether free from what is Divine ; and that, whether we look within to fundamental laws of human thought, or without to ultimate principles of physical science, we find ourselves bounded, and embraced, and contained everywhere, by an infinite fatherhood of various and yet essentially homogeneous energising excellence, which we call God.

doves that sip erotic sweets from the charmed bowl of Venus, could not be exchanged, with any propriety, for the eagle that sits beside the throne of the Thunderer. The ox-head and patera that were carved, with a significant propriety, on the metopes of the entablature of an ancient Greek temple, if represented on the face of a modern Christian Church, where no sacrifice is performed, would express nothing, and are therefore in bad taste.¹ If an owl be seen, staring with a broad gaze on the face of the coins of Athens, the most learned archæologist may not be able, at this date, to give you a satisfactory explanation of what the true meaning of that symbol was; the meaning, in all likelihood, was lost, with the wanderings of those earliest Pelasgi, who brought from the sources of the Euphrates and the Indus, the mythology which Homer's genius adorned, but which Homer himself scarcely half understood; but a meaning unquestionably there lay in this as in every other expression of a purely imaginative piety; for a merely arbitrary association of ideas, in those unsophisticated times, there was assuredly no place.

In the practice of poetry and the fine arts, the achievement of expression is the great problem. 'Expression,' said Lord Byron, in reference to fair women, 'is the soul of beauty;' but the sentence is true with regard to all kinds of beauty; for it is by expression, as we have seen, that the soul, or animating force of anything, is revealed in a world where cognition is possible only through the medium of sensuous impressions. When we talk of human

¹ They are seen on the face of the Edinburgh University, above the gateway, proving that the architect either could not think at all, or that he was not thinking, when he planned that ornament.

beauty, expression is generally opposed to form ; thus we say, that one woman has a fine oval head, but very inexpressive features ; while another woman, the lines of whose face are much less graceful, is, by virtue of her more excellent expression, much more interesting. What is the meaning of this ? Must we reject now the doctrine of symmetry with which we started, having found something much more excellent, which seems to be incompatible with it ?¹ Not at all ; only symmetry, as a species of beauty, cleaving most essentially to things material and tangible, must always be postponed to expression in a being whose most characteristic attributes are, moral and intellectual. In a lifeless doll a fine figure and a pretty face will satisfy all demands, but in a living woman, we expect soul. A feeble expression comes from a feeble soul, just as certainly as a common candle cannot shine with the intense light of a rocket ; and a face altogether void of expression, indicates a soul either absent or lethargic, and existing only, like the soul of a fat pig, for alimentary purposes. Let a reasonable woman, therefore, have symmetrical features, if possible (an extreme degree of want of symmetry will make her hideous), but let her by all means (and this lies partly in her own power) have expressive features ; let her have a face that means something. Few things are more sad than a 'human face divine' that means nothing more, or not half so much, as the face of any dog or donkey that a man may chance to meet by the roadside. But this frequent use of the word expression,

¹ Dr MACVIGAR dilates, with effect, on the contrast between symmetrical and expressive objects, in his work on *The Beautiful, Picturesque, and Sublime*. London, 1837, c. 4.

in reference to human features, must not lead us away from that wider use of the word which belongs to architecture and some other fine arts. Forms in this domain, are as expressive as forces; are, in fact, strictly viewed, only stereotyped forces. Every imprinted shape is the speaking and abiding witness of the power which imprinted it. The expression of stability in a Doric temple, or of airy lightness in a Gothic cathedral, is just as strong and decided as that of mildness in a blue eye, or of fiery vigour in a dark one. Even the materials from which architectural piles are raised, have their own distinct expression. Granite expresses strength; sandstone expresses warmth; marble expresses splendour and purity; wood, when used in an art of which the common material is stone, necessarily expresses weakness, and, therefore, should never be used in a building which is intended to overawe the spectator by massive weight and magnificence. And not only so, but to attempt to disguise such weakness, by painting wood or bricks to look like stone, as Mr Ruskin has eloquently insisted,¹ is a gross offence against the laws of nature and the principles of good taste. For nature is always a veracious worker; and 'every lie,' as we had previously occasion to observe, 'is naturally hateful both to gods and men.' The expressiveness of nature is the necessary issue of her essential truthfulness. Were her granite mountains composed of inane conglomerations of mist, that melted into nothing when touched by the foot of the traveller, we should soon lose all respect for the sublime of her Morvens and Mont Blancs. But mortal men are not acting as her faith-

¹ The Seven Lamps of Architecture.—The Lamp of Truth.

ful admirers and imitators, when they pile up imposing palaces of well-hewn stone, meant to inspire the beholder with respect, and then decorate the vestibule with magnificent rows of purple pillars and pilasters, looking to the eye like stone porphyry, but when you approach them, ringing to the knuckle as only hollow wood rings. These splendid offences against the essential veraciousness of nature, however common they may have been in this country, admit, before an æsthetical tribunal, of no apology. Nature, no doubt, is in the constant habit of veiling what would be unpleasant to behold, both for purposes of protection and pleasure, with a thin web of beautiful surface-work. Such a procedure both the propriety and the necessity of the case justify; but, when her main object is to seem strong, she knows how to be strong; or rather, she seems strong always, and only because she is strong. Artists, therefore, will use their pretty tricks of polish and decoration, with the same propriety, and will not be blamed. Ornamentation is always right, when it gracefully covers an unpleasant adjunct; always wrong, when it labours to create a totally false impression, which an honest spectator, when undeceived, will naturally resent. Toys may be pretty, without being substantial; but a king's palace of painted granite, is an abomination. To such hollow artistic exhibitions, no less than to false display in morals, the weighty words of the wise man apply, 'WHOSO BOASTETH HIMSELF OF A FALSE GIFT, IS LIKE CLOUDS AND WIND WITHOUT RAIN.'

On the virtue of truthfulness in art, a great deal of talk has been made lately, by Mr Ruskin advocating the cause of a certain school of artists, called 'Pre-

Raphaelites,' and denouncing, as contrasted with theirs, the practice of the great majority of modern painters. I have seen only a very few of the works of these artists; but the few that I have seen, taken along with what I have read on the controversy,¹ seem to bring the important elements of the question, to my mind at least, within a very narrow compass. As all nature is full of expressiveness, and, notwithstanding the despotic sway of general types, every special thing has its own special points of expression, it follows that the imitator of nature must know to represent not merely her general types, but the endless variety of special modifications of those types, so far as they, by malformation or misfortune, may not have sunk down into the domain of the ugly. He must know, therefore, not merely to represent a rock, but a granite rock, and a sandstone rock, and a marble quarry; not merely a man, but a German, and an Englishman, and a Frenchman. But though he must know all this, it does by no means follow that he must, on every occasion, use it. Propriety may often require that those points in the individual, which most strongly mark him out as such, that is to say, the striking points of his expression as an individual, should be subordinated to the general idea of the type to which he belongs, or altogether omitted. Jupiter, for instance, was a Greek god; but it is by no means necessary that we should represent him or consider him as in any feature a Greek; he is to us merely divine omnipotence in a human shape; and all special detail, that went beyond this idea in the

¹ (1.) Pre-Raphaelitism, by the author of *Modern Painters*. London, 1851. (2.) What is Pre-Raphaelitism, by John Ballantyne, A.R.S.A. Edinburgh, 1856; judicious, moderate, and sensible.

delineation of such a character, however truthful to nature, would be false to the idea that ought to inspire the artist's hand. In the same way, the head of Christ ought not to be the head of a Jew; for, we are representing the Saviour of men, not the Saviour of the Jews. The representation of a landscape, however wide the leap may appear, is guided fundamentally by the same hand. If the idea of nature, under the gusty forces of a storm, is the main conception which the landscape painter wishes to represent, the mere special character of a rock, in some subordinate part of the picture, is a matter that counts as nothing in the effect which the work is meant to produce, and therefore need not be curiously elaborated. But if a man were painting a scene in Glenrosa, in the island of Arran, meant to be appreciated as Glenrosa, he must certainly paint so as that the eye of a geologist may at once discern the imitation to be of granite rocks, and not of such a sandstone region as the Saxon Switzerland. Expression must always be brought out, and with the more elaborate faithfulness, the better; but always in subordination to the dominant idea of the work and its effect on the spectator. In the famous picture of the Greek Sicyonian artist, Pausias, described by Pliny,¹ in which the flower-girl Glycera, whom the artist passionately admired, was represented in a sitting posture, and plaiting a chaplet of flowers, if the fair figure of the girl only had been accurately executed, and the flowers vaguely, the work would have been bad not only in the flower part, but as a whole; for the flowers, in such a composition, were an essential part of the whole. On the other hand, if in a picture where a Catholic

¹ *Nat. Hist.* xxxv. 11.

saint wrapt in devout contemplation, forms the main subject, a nosegay of flowers, painted with minute and striking accuracy, were introduced into a part of the picture where they must attract particular notice, there might be a danger that their special beauty might divide the admiration of the spectator, which ought to be wholly occupied with a beauty of a very different kind, in the pale serenity and fixed earnestness of the devotee's features. In the pictures which often present themselves in actual life, the eye never does see every thing. Many things, though in the sphere of vision, are actually not seen, or, if they are seen, are seen in a subordinate position, and with inferior distinctness. Truthfulness in painting, therefore, following this hint of nature, will not consist in delineating all objects with a minute accuracy, but in bringing forward the most significant objects that bear upon the fundamental conception of the work, with their most characteristic expression.¹

I will make only two other short observations under the head of Expressiveness, and then proceed to some new considerations. My first remark relates to SIMPLICITY. We have all heard the praise of this virtue ;

¹ ' A correct representation of nature, or high finish, does not consist in making every portion of a picture equally obvious to the eye, or in making every object upon the same plane ; or in making a wild rose on the further side of a rock as distinctly visible as a daisy at its foot ; in painting the pattern on a piece of drapery stronger in effect than a figure placed in front of it ; in losing sight of relief and a natural roundness of form, and of aerial perspective generally.' JOHN BALLANTYNE ; who has admirably illustrated the general doctrine set forth in the text, by a comparison between a Pre-Raphaelite picture, called 'The Carpenter's Shop,' and Raphael's picture in the Louvre, called *La Belle Jardiniere*.

and there is no axiom more generally allowed in æsthetic criticism, than that men of the greatest genius, and of the most well-disciplined talents, are precisely the men who are most remarkable for simplicity of style. Homer and Goethe, and the Sermon on the Mount, however diverse in other respects, are all equally remarkable for simplicity. Nothing, indeed, is more common than to find young men, swelling and seething with a tumultuous tempest of bright ideas, or dazzling the eye with a floating display of curiously coloured lights of the imagination, very much astonished inwardly, that Homer, and Goethe, and Walter Scott, who seem to say so many common things in a common way, should be so much more admired than they are. To such Titanic heaven-stormers¹ the quiet human simplicity of such great men is an offence. The cause of this confusion lies, no doubt, partly in the impatient exuberance of display, which belongs to the period of incomplete manhood; but there are instances, not a few, of men of talent, who, at no period of life, make any approach to this excellent virtue of simplicity, but become more removed from it, the nearer they approach the goal of their literary career. The style of these men becomes a conglomeration of rich faults and splendid vices. What key does our æsthetic philosophy supply us with, for the explanation of such phenomena? The explanation, we think, lies on the surface. Simplicity of style is only the most easy, natural, direct, unmixed, unencumbered fashion of

¹ The Germans, at one period, had a school of such persons characteristically designated *STUERMER* and *DRAENGER*, of whose doings some mention will be found, I think, in Goethe's well-known autobiography.

saying what a man has to say, or doing what he has to do ; it is a pure, healthy, and well-toned expression, satisfying the demand of a just appetite, and nothing more. It proceeds from a pure single purpose, and, therefore, is pure and simple in its effects. It never pretends to be what it is not; it never strives to do more than it can do easily; it never hunts for ornaments that it may make a display, but lets them come when they are required, to give the tale significance. It is never forward, and never bashful; but always adequate. It is so essentially natural, that many persons, in these times, who have been disnatured by conventional refinement and fastidious sentiment, cannot away with it. There is a plainness about it which the dainty humour of modern dining-rooms and saloons will not tolerate. It is a stone of stumbling, not only in Homer and Goethe, but in the Bible also, if we would speak honestly. And yet it remains an excellent thing—the most excellent thing—for it is only a form of truth. If you wish to understand how admirable a thing it is, study the Bible. This, truly, is the most simple of all books, because it is the most honest. Contrast with the style of the Old and New Testaments, the style of many a modern sermon, and you will apprehend what a divine simplicity breathes there, which is not here. What is the reason of this? Our sermons are not always true. The discourse does not mean what it seems to mean. It talks about fire, but it is full of coldness. It discants on pity, but there are no tears; it exhibits God, when it ought first to feel Him. Our preachers have not always a single eye. They seem to be caring only for the souls of others; but they are partly also exhibiting themselves, or encumbered by an undue regard to a

thousand small proprieties with which a genuine evangelist should hold converse—no, not for a moment. They preach against sins, to which their hearers have no temptation, and are silent on those which they are habitually committing. By these and other influences, the possessor of a modern pulpit often finds himself in a false position; and the simplicity which belongs to a genuine utterance, of course, fails to appear. Even a true man, in a false position, can no more speak with a true expression, than a good pair of lungs can play well without a well-tempered atmosphere. My second observation relates to the energy and potency of the expressive element in art. It is not enough for an artistical purpose that the expression of a work of art be true; it must display nature and truth, fully and effectively, in her most significant moments. There are many days in the summer season; but there will always be one day, which, more than all the rest, expresses to the sensitive eye the rich leafy glory and blossomy triumph of that yearly manhood of vegetable nature. This day the painter of summer beauty will know how to appreciate, and in due season to employ. So in the life of every great man, who is a proper subject for high art, there is a moment, when his character culminates before men, when the special mission of his existence is concentrated in some significant act that is at once the summation of all that is good in his past career, and the prophecy of all that shall be worth recording in his future destiny.¹ Such moments, glow-

¹ So FUSELI (*Lectures' Works*, ii., p. 89) says of Raphael, that, in his composition, he understood to seize 'the moment of transition, big with the past, and pregnant with the future.'—RUSKIN, *Part*

ing with the intensified expression of a noble life, are always dramatic. They are historical pictures, ready made by Nature, which they who know and reverence what is great in nature, will find. Such a moment was that in the career of a famous old Roman soldier, when he firmly counselled war against Carthage, though his own life must pay the forfeit of his obdurate patriotism, and every dearest sympathy of humanity was clinging round him, and beseeching him to relent:—

*Fertur pudicae conjugis osculum,
Parvosque natos, ut capitis minor,
Ab se removisse, et virilem
Torvus humi posuisse vultum ;
Donec labantes consilio Patres
Firmaret auctor nunquam aliàs dato,
Interque moerentes amicos
Egregius properaret exsul.
Atqui sciebat quae sibi barbarus
Tortor pararet : non aliter tamen
Dimovit obstantes propinquos,
Et populum redivit morantem,
Quàm si clientum longa negotia,
Dijudicatâ lite, relinqueret,
Tendens Venafranòs in agros,
Aut Lacedaemonium Tarentum.*

Such a moment, likewise, was that when the great-souled Augustinian monk, unaccustomed to the pomp of kings and the splendour of courts, but strong in those highest convictions which self-communion gives to the wise solitary, stood before the assembly of political and ecclesiastical princes in the Council Hall at Worms, and, in the presence of the Emperor of

II., § 1, c. 6, means the same thing, when he says, ‘*Talkative facts are always more interesting and more important than silent ones.*’

half Europe, made that memorable protest in behalf of the primeval liberties of the Gospel, which unshackled millions of intelligent souls, and blew the brilliant air-castles of Papal pride into nothingness with one honest word—DA STEH ICH—GOTT HELF MIR—ICH KANN NICHT ANDERS! To bring forward such dramatic moments of the highest existence with due prominence, carefully subordinating all inferior moments of less pregnant expression, is the great art of the accomplished historian, as distinguished from the mere recorder of facts. History, as written by a Livy, a Tacitus, and a Macaulay, with a quick eye for such expressive aspects of the most intense social verity, is a fine art of the highest order; but without this, in the shape either of dry narrative, or mingled with ephemeral political discussion and local partizanship, it is thrown into the domain of vulgar cognition, and is altogether disowned by that highest function of intellect which delights in the embodiment of Ideals. But it is painting, even more than history or epic poetry, which, without the finest perception of this most pregnant and expressive moment, becomes, as a fine art, utterly null. A historian or a poet may compensate for a want of power in exhibiting the most vivid moments of moral expression, by a faculty of rich profusion in the representation of successive groups of inferior moments; but the historical painter deals only with a single moment, and stakes his all on the effect that may be produced by that. It must, therefore, before all things, be a speaking moment—a moment, if possible, that not only speaks in the most impressive way, but suggests a great deal more than can possibly be spoken even by the

most detailed and eloquent exposition. It must be a moment full of vital power, a moment also as pleasurable as it is forcible, so that the spectator will not be averse to give it a permanent habitation before his eyes. For which reason a wise artist will refrain from painting many things that a wise poet will triumph in describing; for a painful page passes, but a painted horror remains. Thus every art has its own peculiar compass of expression, as each peculiar musical instrument has its own compass of notes; but, above all arts, painting is perilous to an eye that is more discursive than intent, and a fancy that floats lightly over many things, but settles seriously on none. A painter must be a serious man; for only such an one is capable of that concentration of all the powers of the mind on a single great aspect of life or nature, which is necessary to bring out all the potency of what it declares, and all the significance of what it suggests.

The next great ruling principle of art on which I shall make a few remarks is

MODERATION;

and this, like the others which I have mentioned, is a principle not of art only, but of life, and of the whole system of things. For if there be one protoplasmic Divine power, of which the true, the good, and the beautiful are only various manifestations, these three things must, in their roots and ruling principles, be essentially the same, and have in fact been recognised as such by the profoundest thinkers, both

ancient and modern.¹ By moderation, then, we mean a certain measure (*modus*), within the recognised bounds of which every created thing must keep itself; otherwise it can neither be healthy, nor true, nor beautiful. This was the old and trite doctrine of the ancient Greek gnomic writers: “*παντὶ μέσῳ τὸ κρᾶτος* Θεός *ᾤπασεν*,” as Æschylus has it; but not the less subtle in application because in enunciation it is easy; so fertile in every direction of practical life, that the most subtle thinker of antiquity could find no more catholic principle on which to base a work of Ethics, that still forms the favourite text-book of some of the finest scholars in the most practical country of the modern world.² A doctrine of health and of good manners, of very large comprehensiveness, could, no doubt, be raised on the same foundation. “Simplicity,” says a great English artist, “is an exact medium between too much and too little. Grace is the medium of motion; beauty is the medium of form; and genteelness is the medium of fashion.”³ People have made objections to this doctrine, as indeed they may to any doctrine, provided it suits their convenience or their indolence to take one aspect of truth for the whole; for nature is

¹ In this PLATO, COUSIN, and VISCHER agree; as, in fact, all great thinkers ever have agreed on all the essential verities of nature.

² ARISTOTLE'S *Nicomachean Ethics*, a well-known standard book at Oxford.

³ Sir JOSHUA REYNOLDS: *Works* by BEECHEY, i., p. 294. So HOGARTH, in describing his serpentine line of beauty (of which anon), makes an express condition, that it shall be a just medium, “neither too bulging nor too tapering.”—Analysis, c. x. FUSELI defines *Grace* on the same principle very elegantly:—“By grace I mean that artless balance of action and repose, springing from

vastly richer than any of our definitions, and will not be exhausted by a phrase. But the principle of the MEDIUM still remains a great and fundamental truth, against which all men are every day sinning; highly gifted men generally on the side of too much, weaker intellects on the side of too little. For people who are fond of asking reasons, it is not difficult to explain why this must be so, and should be accepted gratefully as a necessary condition of all healthy vital action. If finite things are to exist at all, they must exist under certain limitations; if these limitations are not observed, a disturbed action, or if the excess be continued, total destruction and dissolution must ensue. If a river flows more violently than the bank which marks out its course can bear, it overflows the restriction by virtue of which it exists as a collection of water having a specific character; it ceases to be a well-ordered stream, and becomes a chaotic inundation. If a man grow seven feet and a half high, while the normal height of the *animal bipes implume* is scarcely six feet, he has stepped beyond the law of his kind, he has disowned the type that makes him what he is; he is a monster; no attractions of complexion, of feature, of talent and various accomplishment, can ever make him handsome. Nature has an undoubted right to dictate a normal magnitude to every creature that treads the earth: this norm is part of its congruity in the ordered system of graduated

character, founded on propriety, which neither falls short of the demands nor overleaps the modesty of nature. Applied to execution, it means that dexterous power which hides the means by which its effect was obtained, the difficulties it has conquered."—Lecture I, *Works*, vol. ii., p. 22.

existence ; and whatever offends grossly against it, whether by excess or defect, is ugly. But there are other reasons why all excessive demonstrations, either of form or force, are in bad taste. One reason manifestly is, the difficulty that the quiet spectator has in working himself up to the point where he may be able fully to sympathise with a highly-potentiated emotion. Hence we see that a violent manner in public speakers, especially in impassioned and enthusiastic young men, often creates laughter ; and the rapt orator is not a little astonished to find, that where he is most in earnest, his audience seem most determined to be only amused, and where he feels most sublime, many a benevolent hearer is troubled, in spite of himself, with keen titillations of the ludicrous. This is the reason also why love scenes and love declarations on the stage, generally appear ridiculous. If all the spectators were always in love, Romeo and Juliet might be acted every night, and every bearded auditor might prefer, literally, to be the 'glove upon that hand,' rather than to be installed in the place of the archangel Uriel, as vicegerent of the Sun. Hence a good practical rule for all public exhibitors, poets, orators, actors, and preachers, is that, whenever they wish to excite very intense emotion, they must work their audience up to it gradually, and remove the extraordinary tension with all convenient speed ; for nature is neither willing suddenly to leap up to a point far beyond her normal law of healthy action, nor is she able to maintain herself there for any protracted period with comfort. From the same cause, generally, all highly stimulated literature is dangerous, not only to the reader, but more especially to the writer. People

should not write with the determination of saying something very witty and brilliant in every sentence. An eternal display of wit in a book is just as offensive as a banquet containing nothing but peppered dishes, or a thirst that can allay itself by drinking nothing but champaign. Classicality will never be attained by a writer who seems haunted in every page by the terror of being dull; and moderate talents, well husbanded and well-harmonised, will achieve more lasting literary conquests over the human mind, than extraordinary but ill-tempered powers that are always striving to do more than they can achieve with ease to themselves or with enjoyment to their neighbours. Whatever a strong man does effectively, he will do with a certain calmness in the midst of his force, and, therefore, without exaggeration; for, besides the other reasons just mentioned, excessive violence in any artistic demonstration will generally fail of its effect, because it proceeds from some inherent weakness, and from a want of the grand intellectual faculty of self-control. CLEON made more noise than PERICLES in his oratory, beating the air with his hands, as we are told, and slapping his thigh, and making various kinds of demagogic demonstrations:¹ but the ruler of the Athenian demos, though he carried a thunderbolt on his tongue, launched it not tempestuously, like one to whom such formidable weapon was unfamiliar, but calmly, like its rightful owner, the Jove of Olympus; for which reason he also was rightly surnamed the Olympian. So it appears that the modest self-limitation everywhere observable in healthy Nature, is

¹ PLUTARCH, *Nicias*, 8.

founded alike on wisdom and on strength ; and that the triumphs of brilliant but ill-regulated genius, like the feats of force displayed by madmen, can be obtained only by the sacrifice of an intellectual energy at once more pure, more effective, and more permanent.

Closely allied in some respects to the principle just stated, is another popularly recognised element of beauty, which next demands attention.

To the Beautiful belongs a certain **SOFTNESS**, **GENTLENESS**, and **DELICACY**, both in the exhibition of individual forms and forces, and in those skilful transitions from one to another that form some of the most necessary congruities of composite art.¹

That this proposition holds true with regard to all our sensuous impressions—those which are purely sensuous, no less than those in which the eye and ear are merely the ministers of the intellect—every one knows by experience. Soft bodies, such as velvet, peaches, and old mossy grass, are pleasant to the touch ; colours, subdued and toned down from glaring brilliancy, are pleasant to the eye : in like manner are all softly rounded and wavy forms, as opposed to what is square, sharp, harsh, and angular ; and the appreciation of meats and drinks by the palate, and of smells by the nose, evidently follows the same law. For the taste of vinegar is sharp and piercing to the tongue, just as a glaring red is to the eye ; and there are smells

¹ This matter of smoothness was a great point with BURKE ; an author whom I have not read, but find him criticised in STEWART'S *Essay on the Beautiful*, c. iv., and taken to task for having stated too broadly that 'he cannot recollect anything beautiful that is not smooth.'

which seem rudely to rush into the nostrils and tear the olfactory nerves, just as intent looking upon crimson pains the eye. Now, one reason at least of this delight in soft and gentle impressions of all kinds, lies in the very nature of sensuous perception, and in the great law of moderation as applied to it. If vital enjoyment be a succession of stimulants (as seems pretty plain), that sort of stimulant must be the most agreeable which occupies without irritating or fatiguing the sense to which it is applied. The nature of finite things, as has been already stated, and the finely calculated measure by which all normal life is maintained, imperatively demand this. A harsh and grating sound is disagreeable, in the first place, no doubt, because it hurts all those cunning concords on which acoustic enjoyment depends; but it is offensive and hostile to the nature of hearing, in the second place, because it does rude violence to the auditory nerves, and pays no respect to the essential harmonies of their organisation. The contrary qualities make BELLINI'S music, and the music of the Italians generally, delicious. There is a higher beauty, of course, than the beauty of mere sensuous luxury,—there is the beauty of moral expression, to which the inferior sort, with the judicious, will always be subordinated; but all men have senses, and only the thoughtful have judgment: therefore Bellini will be more popular than Beethoven. But why, it will be asked, are straight lines and angular projections less pleasing than curved lines and well-rounded borders? To this, in the first place, it is by no means altogether fanciful to answer, that sharp forms have a certain irritating effect on the eye, analogous to that produced by very glaring colours.

The pain, however, is by no means so obvious, as the eye is more immediately affected by colours only, and the imaginative, or combining intellect, by forms. We must, therefore, try to find some other causes of the beauty of rounded and wavy outlines; and to discover these, we must revert to the comprehensive doctrine of expressiveness, already explained. What does a straight line express? The direction of a single force. Every body, when propelled by one simple force, will move forward in a straight line so long as that force continues to act; for the common parabolic curve of projectiles, as every elementary student of physics knows, is the result of the continued action of a double force, —the force of the projecting instrument, which acts in a straight line, and the force of gravitation, which bends that line, according to a calculable proportion, more and more into a curvature. A straight line, whenever produced, is the product of the least possible wealth of acting forces, so far as mere direction is concerned: it speaks of no grand combination, or skilfully managed complexity of various powers; it is easy and simple, and therefore justly excites no particular admiration. Any boy can fling a stone; but only a skillful and well-exercised juggler can cause an array of brass balls to leap from one hand into the other with curious precision, after describing a circle before his eyes, as completely rounded as any that Plato ever admired in the orbits of his sphery gods. In the same way, a youth who has just learned to hold the ice on a pair of skates, will run on in a straight line right before the wind, without variety; but the graceful ease of the delicately-balanced curve belongs only to the masters in that elegant art, the praises of which

have been sung by the bard of the Messiah. Curved lines, therefore, are graceful, because they express the action of a more rich, thoroughly exercised, and completely self-possessed harmony of forces; but that they have also, even in themselves, something essentially pleasing to the sense, when compared with the effect of sharp and prickly angles, will, I hope, to the unsophisticated reasoner, be sufficiently evident.

That rounded forms are the result of a more rich interaction of well-balanced forces, will be evident further from the familiar fact, that curved lines increase everywhere in creation, just in proportion as organisation is made more complete, and forces more complex. In the inorganic world, straight lines manifestly are the law. I do not know that there are any round crystals; though I do not see why there should not be, as the earth is round, and the planets, and the globules of all liquid bodies. But there is a plain reason why the forms of higher organisation should not be composed of straight lines. Life is too rich a thing to express itself in the meagre way of straight lines: it is a thing full of easy play and graceful adaptability; and it is by curvilinear forms and variously bending and sweeping forces alone, that such a cunning potentiation of energy can be evolved. But Nature, furthermore, seems expressly to have avoided angular lines in the human form, that she might have full scope for the production of what one might call superfluous pleasure, in which she seems everywhere to wanton.¹

¹ The function of the element of FAT in the human body (useful also for other important purposes), in contributing to the curvilinear beauty of the human figure, has been often noticed. On this subject, HOGARTH has the following remarks:—

In the female form especially, the utmost delicacy of finely rounded outline seems to have been aimed at as a luxury ; and here we must remark, that the beauty of such a complex whole as the female figure, depends not merely on the softness of the parts, or the gentle swelling of curved forms, considered separately, but in the exceeding delicacy and niceness of the transitions from one part of the wavy outline to another. The curved line, indeed, is the grand instrument by which Nature effects her graceful passages from one part of a complex organism to another ; as may be easily understood by any person who will inscribe a square in a circle, and then imagine the segments of the circle which are without the square suddenly cut off. In this case, it is manifest that a body which we shall suppose to have previously moved easily in

‘ If the reader pursues the anatomical inquiry which I have indicated a very little further, just to form a true idea of the elegant use that is made of the skin and fat beneath it, to conceal from the eye all that is hard and disagreeable, and at the same time to preserve to it whatever is necessary in the shape of the parts beneath to give grace and beauty to the whole limb, he will find himself insensibly led into the principles of that grace and beauty which is to be found in well-turned limbs, in fine, elegant, healthy life, or in those of the best antique statues, as well as into the reason why his eye has so often unknowingly been pleased and delighted with them.

‘ Thus, in all other parts of the body, as well as these, wherever, for the sake of the necessary motion of the parts, with proper strength and agility, the insertions of the muscles are too hard and sudden, their swellings too bold, or the hollows between them too deep for their outlines to be beautiful, Nature most judiciously softens these hardnesses, and plumps up these vacancies with a proper supply of fat, and covers the whole with the soft, smooth, springy, and in delicate life, almost transparent skin, which, conforming itself to the external shape of all the parts beneath, expresses to the eye the idea of its contents with the utmost delicacy of beauty and grace.’—*Analysis*, c. x.

the circular orbit, if forced to make the same journey from point to point by observing the tetragonal boundary, would lose its grace of transition from one direction to another, and be obliged to make a violent bend at each of the four corners ; so that, if there were no other cause, the mere convenience of turning from one direction of force to another, would (as we see in railways) cause the curve to predominate in Nature, wherever her workings become complex. But the eye experiences from the delicacy of all transitions a sort of unconscious delight, even when the understanding does not in any way appreciate the principles of scientific art, on which such skilful management of complex forces depend. If a working man were so ignorant as not to know that transitions from one form of activity to another require a greater amount of skill than the continuance of any one energy in its original direction, the mere novelty of a series of delicately blending transitions, and the pleasing occupation which it gives to the sense, would suffice to raise in his mind an emotion of peculiar delight. But, indeed, there is another cause at work in bringing about the delight with which we witness delicately-made transitions, which I will here explain. When we see a fine sunset, for instance, or a painting in which the colours, or the lights and shades, flow into one another with a subtle fineness, like the harmonious blending of musical notes, there is first the beauty of mere variety of colour, of course, which exists equally well in a harlequin's jacket; but what the harlequin's jacket has not, while it is the characteristic glory of the sunset, and the rainbow, and the well-toned painting, is a curiously graduated passage from one extreme of luminous impression to ano-

ther,—this graduation acting as a reconciling medium between the two ends of a scale, of which the direct juxtaposition would occasion a feeling of harsh incompatibility. A delicately managed transition is, therefore, one method of creating congruity among contraries. In cases where contrast is not desirable, the harsh effect produced by the too near conjunction of opposing forms, or forces, is subdued, by the occupation of the intermediate space by reconciling potencies ; and a graceful truce is thus established between things naturally hostile.

The next element of the Beautiful, which has been already indicated by unavoidable anticipation, but which yet requires a few sentences of special notice, is

VARIETY.

And here, of course, I do not speak of that variety in unity, which is only another name for congruity, and has been sufficiently discussed in the first of these discourses ; but I mean variety generally, as opposed to monotony and sameness. There are two very obvious causes why variety, in all sorts of exhibitions, must always please. The first of these reasons is plainly what we all feel, that all pleasurable sensation, being more or less of the nature of stimulus, a constant repetition of the same stimulant impression, must, in the very nature of things, pall upon the receptive organ, blunt the edge of its susceptibility, and at length, in the case of certain temperaments, oppress it with an intolerable sense of weariness and languor. If any person will further ask, why this is so, I should feel inclined to ask him, why it should *not* be so. I do not believe it

is in the power even of Omnipotence to make a walk of thirty miles along the never-varying plains of Northern Germany, however richly clad with green fertility, as agreeable as a similar stretch among the winding dales, and ever-shifting undulations, of a beautiful English county. Monotonous action must fatigue a finite sense; and variety must be grateful, not merely as the introducer of a new attraction, but as a relief from the oppression of what is perseveringly old. But the other cause which commends variety, if not more necessary in the constitution of things, appears more noble, as being less dependent on the mere sensuous capacity of endurance. It is simply this, that variety is only another name for wealth, while monotony is the natural result of poverty. We say habitually of the writer of a poem, of the author of a play, of the exhibitor of fire-works, of the superintendent of any public exhibition whatsoever, that he has shewn great poverty of invention, that there was no variety in his entertainment. The same of a general when he bungles a campaign: he has no variety of resources; he acts upon a stereotyped plan; he has no conception how to meet an unexpected combination. In all things a man's variety is the measure of his wealth; and variety, well used, will be the measure of his power. There is nothing that the world, in general, so well understands as this. From a good dinner to a good sermon; from the last old English fashion revived to the last new French fashion imported, the effective power of almost everything that delights and entertains the world, depends on variety. Nor is this wrong. There is a certain ground-work of permanency, no doubt, to which a well-constituted mind will always recur; but,

saving this, the delight in any sort of monotony, and the habitual indifference to all variety of vital stimulant, though some people may be willing to pass it off for virtue, is merely a sign of a blunted sense, and a natural or acquired stupidity. Old persons are averse to variety, not only because they have seen much in the world, and expect to find nothing new, but because their sensibilities, like their limbs, are stiff, and opposed to every change of action. Some young people, again, are remarkable for the intense tenacity with which they cling to any object on which they have fixed their affection. Their souls stand in a sort of magnetic relation to only one human being out of all the millions by whom they are surrounded ; and beyond the electric delight which this single ecstatically-cherished relationship produces, all mortal men are clods to them, or walls beyond which they never dream of extending the curiously-fastidious feelers of their affection. There is, unquestionably, in the monotony of such an exclusive passion, a certain exhibition of mental force ; but it is, on the whole, to be looked upon as the sign of a meagre moral temperament, and a narrow emotional capacity. The more multifariously a man's humanity flows out into his fellow-men, and the more variously their humanity flows into him, the more rich will be the product of enlarged and ripened sympathy, the more complete and well-rounded the intellectual insight, and general human capacity. If a man be five times a man, as the Emperor Charles V. is reported to have said, by knowing five languages, he may be a hundred times a man, if, by a flexible and various sympathy, he can make a hundred different phases of human character pass into his own soul and

become a part of himself. As the perfection of the world, according to Plato,¹ depends upon the production of every possible variety of animals, so the perfection of any human character consists in its containing every possible variety of human affections ; which can only be achieved by every man sharing as widely as possible in the life of every other, in every variety different from himself. And if such be the power of variety in the formation of character, it is certainly no less great in the successful execution of works of art ; so great, indeed, that our fine pictorial humorist, Hogarth, who has theorised so ingeniously on the art which he practised so felicitously, did not hesitate to write, "*The art of composing well, is no more than the art of varying well ;*" and he attributes the graceful effect of the serpentine line of beauty, with which his name is associated, to the variety with which its shifting outline occupies the imagination of the spectator. That this reason is a just one there can be no doubt ; though it does not, in any degree, trench upon the validity of the other reasons for the beauty of curvature offered under the previous head. The beauty of the compound curved mouldings in architecture, called technically the *ogee* and the *cyma*, and of the various graceful turns in the outline of Greek vases, candelabra, and ornamental utensils of all kinds, depends on the same principle. The fine flowing lines of vegetation, whether rising with a graceful elasticity, or drooping with an elegant frailty ; the curiously-twisted, or richly-rounded figures of shells, and of the horns of animals ; the subtle turns of motion in an elegant female figure, especially in that most natural and

¹ Timæus, 41, B.

healthy of all amusements, DANCING, which the Greeks so justly appreciated;¹ all these are only the varied exhibitions of the perpetual delight which Nature seems to take in feeding the imperial sense of vision with the utmost possible variety of impression, through the medium of dexterously conducted curvature. It is needless to add, that, in the graceful deportment which marks persons of fine breeding, in the effective action of the stage and the pulpit, and in all departments, whether of social life or refined art, where a skilful display of regulated forces, or well-grouped forms is expected, the beauty of the exhibition depends on the principles here stated. Presupposing always a noble conception, a healthy tone, a single purpose, and a prudent economy, the ART OF COMPOSING WELL is, in the words of our great pictorial humorist, literally nothing else than the ART OF VARYING WELL.

Closely allied to variety in the production of certain æsthetical impressions, though in a very inferior and subsidiary way, is the principle of

NOVELTY.

On this little need be said. It is manifestly not a constituent element of beauty, in the same sense as the principles previously stated. Without order and congruity, and a skilful disposition of richly varied parts, beauty, such as to affect the intellect is impossible;

¹ In Scotland, many excellent people object to this most elegant art, partly, no doubt, because it is often connected with late hours and unhealthy habits; but partly also from a grim sort of religion, which is often found in Calvinistic countries, among young ladies of a thoughtful temper.

but novelty in the object exhibited, is evidently not at all necessary to the constitution of its beauty ; but only with reference to the spectator's susceptibility, assists the perception of it in a very subsidiary way. Still, the influence of newness and freshness of impression must, in the very nature of finite existence, be not inconsiderable. The world lies not less beautiful before an old man than before a young man ; but the young man will appreciate it more keenly, for other obvious reasons, and for this also, because it is new. The continent of Europe, taken generally, is not more beautiful than England ; but people travel wisely abroad, before they are well acquainted with their own country, because the mere strangeness and novelty of many things thus seen, excites their dull perceptiveness, which, being once aroused, is now capable of contemplating, with a discriminating pleasure, thousands of home beauties, that would otherwise have passed unregarded. This is an example of what may be called mere incidental novelty. But the freshness of youthful perception, not only in individuals, but in nations, involves a charm of novelty, which goes more deeply into the nature of things, and achieves more mighty results. Who can doubt, for instance, that the mere novelty of the reappearance of Plato, and the great classical writers, in the fifteenth century, added no inconsiderable momentum to the energetic love, with which polite literature was cultivated at the court of the Medici ? In the same way, the influence of German literature on England at the present day, though not without other, and more essential causes, is powerfully assisted by its novelty. Clever people grew tired of eternally quoting the

brilliant French wit of Voltaire, and therefore gladly welcomed the calm German wisdom of Goethe, though somewhat heathenish. But there is something more in the love of novelty than the mere love of change. When a young lady, at a circulating library, asks for the last new novel, she does this, certainly not because she is tired of the old novels (for them she, in all likelihood, has never read), but because every new thing is more a part of our present life than any old thing. A book published in Britain at this hour interests me, because I am a man embraced by the same moments of space and time, which envelope the writer of the book. It is nothing to me that as good a work on the same subject was written five thousand years ago, by some serene sage on the banks of the river Yiang sei Kiang, in China. I want to see what my friend, or my mighty Apollo, says here, just now; struggling manfully, as he does, through that tempestuous ocean of rushing opinions, in which I find it so difficult to keep my breath. New things, therefore, are imperatively demanded by every creature keenly alive to the vital environment by which it is surrounded. To create for one's self a world of exclusive converse with what is old, as scholars are apt to do; to converse always with Cicero and Aristotle, while Hamilton and Hegel are not even glanced at, is altogether artificial, is an unnatural transplantation of your intellect out of the world to which it does belong, into a world to which it does not belong. No doubt, after the mind is fully satiated with what is modern, a grand effect of novelty may be produced, by returning to what is old; and herein lies one of the charms of classical learning, with those who are

men before they are scholars, and do not perversely substitute the pale proprieties of a past, which lives only on paper, for the quickening stimulus afforded by the glowing novelties of the present. Nature seems also sufficiently careful in all things, that the passionate appetite for new excitement, which belongs to all living creatures, shall not be left without a large supply of such nourishment as is both healthy and stimulative. For what is the mission of genius (of which every age, not in sheer decrepitude, has its share), but to reproduce what is old, and in a form so strikingly new, that all eyes shall be drawn to it, and fed, with a wondering admiration? The greatest novelties in literature and art, are only new applications of old principles. Any other originality of creative power, may be sought after by ambitious young men, but is not cared for by adults of well-balanced powers. The best things in the world, are both the oldest and the best known; and lest they should be neglected for their commonness, nature has curiously provided that they shall be presented to human love and admiration, like the Indian gods, always under the disguise of a new Avatar, so that, while the old unvarying divine power acts, the human love for a new stimulus may be gratified. Thus, the proper balance between the stability which belongs to what is eternal, and the mutability which is inherent in things temporal, is kept up. While everything seems every day renewed, nothing old is lost. The sunny old Ionian Homer reappears, after nearly three thousand years, in Walter Scott; and the antique Heathen Plato, vested with a new humanity, in the person of the most Christian Coleridge, teaches British utilitarians of the nineteenth

century, to believe in something behind their senses, and clerical formalists to interpret some reasonable meaning into their creeds.¹

Let us now pass to the consideration of a principle of taste, which plays a very notable part in the fine arts, especially in the pictorial; I mean

CONTRAST.

Here, again, we have not to do with a constituent element of beauty, as fundamentally necessary as symmetry, moderation, or congruity. A beautiful thing is essentially beautiful in itself, and requires no juxtaposition either with an ugly thing or a thing containing an opposite element of beauty, in order that it may produce its natural effect on every well organised and fairly developed spectator. But without contrast, certainly, it will never produce its full effect; for a picture, in fact, becomes a picture in the highest artistical sense, only when the forms and

¹ Conformably with the remarks in the text, FUSELI says finely: 'Form, in its widest meaning, the visible universe, that envelopes our senses, the invisible One, that agitates our minds with visions bred on sense by fancy are the elements, and the realm of INVENTION; it discovers, selects, combines the possible, the probable, the known, in a mode that *strikes with an air of truth and novelty at once*.'—(Lecture iii., *Works*, vol. ii., 137.) WALTER SCOTT says the same thing: 'Poetry is the art of expressing or illustrating ideas, arguments, characters, and situations, moral lessons, emotions, and events, in clear, melodious, and powerful language, *such as will place the subject in a new light*, and is fitted to impress the minds of an audience, and to be remembered.'—Recollections of Scott, by GILLIES, *Fraser's Magazine*, 1837, p. 22.) Thus we see that the novelty is only in the *light*, the subject itself being old.

lights composing it are separated from the great world of form and light, of which it is a part, by a certain and very appreciable darkness. It is not merely for the production of a peculiarly solemn effect, as Reynolds remarks,¹ but for the very existence of painting in its most effective potency, that the proper management of darkness is necessary. Herein, certainly, to those who will think of it seriously, lies a great mystery, which may, perhaps, go some small way to explain the famous problem of the origin of evil, which has vexed profound thinkers in all ages. For it appears indubitably, that the positive GOOD, which we call LIGHT, does not, and cannot in the nature of things, appear so beautiful by itself as when contrasted with the positive EVIL opposed to it, which we call darkness. Nay more; opticians and practical colour men know perfectly well that certain colours are produced by a mixture of a given amount of the element of darkness, with a given amount of the element of light; and thus, the sphere of what is positively enjoyable by the eye, is enlarged and enriched by the addition of an element taken from the world of blind negation, to which all visual power is essentially hostile. Evil, thus, in one instance, appears necessary for achieving the highest amount of good; and why may it not be so in other instances? Is it possible, we may justly ask, even for infinite power to make green fields and fresh water so pleasant to angels and archangels, as they are to the weary mortal wight, who has panted his way through three days of Libyan sand and sun, before he is revived by the longed for vision of the oasis? But,

¹ *Works* by Beechey, vol. i., p. 136, in a criticism of the Transfiguration.

waiving metaphysical analogies, it seems quite plain that the painter, who, though dealing in the element of varied light, should set all his figures in bright sunshine, and leave shade altogether out of account in his art, would be considered a bungler. In fact, the greatest painters have always been the most skilful in the management of darkness, whether they have loved to tone it down gradually into their region of strong central light, or by startling juxtaposition, have wished to imitate the occasional sublime effects of nature in her moments of gathering gloom and tempestuous outbreak. In the best portraits by Titian, Giorgione, Velasquez, and other great masters, the dark element decidedly preponderates, besides its own proper virtue of contrast, giving a softness and depth to the whole work, which no disposition of mere colour, however cunningly made, could have achieved. Of Michael Angelo Carravaggi the same ingenious artist-thinker, whom we have so often quoted,¹ says, 'That darkness gave him light; into his melancholy cell, light stole only with a pale reluctant ray, or broke on it, as flashes in a stormy night. The most vulgar forms, he recommended by ideal light and shade, and a tremendous breadth of manner.' But, it is not only by contrasts of light and darkness, but by the juxtaposition of certain colours, bearing certain well-known optical relations to one another, that painters produce some of their greatest effects. If white, which is the fulness of undivided light, contrasts well with black, which is the negation of all light, red which is the most potent element of divided light, contrasts no less favourably with green. This you may observe in the

¹ Fuseli.

pictures of many of the old masters, whether it be in the juxtaposition of draperies, or in prominence given to some red-coated equestrian in the foreground of a landscape, whose background is rich with the various greenery of trees. That the contrast between green and red is of a very distinct and decided kind, any one may make perceptible to his feeling, by placing orange beside red, or even yellow; there is more of the dark element in green, which, as we know, is a compound colour, resulting from the admixture of yellow with blue. But green, in some of its various tints, being also a lively and gay colour, possesses also an element of relationship to red, which will work along with its contrasting power in heightening the result of their combination. For the greatest artistic effects are seldom produced by the operation of only one principle. There are numbers, and proportions, harmonies and discords, in the world of colours, unquestionably even as in the world of form, and of modulated sound; but, a concord and a discord, may sometimes act together, as we see, in the faces of persons belonging to the same family, great likeness and great disparity combined. So red may harmonise with green, because it is very unlike in one respect, and yet very like in another. It is a remarkable, though familiar, fact in optics, that a person, after gazing intently on a patch of red colour for sometime, will find, on removing the red, its place assumed by a spot of green. In this case the eye seems to relieve itself from the overaction of the most intense colour, by the substitution of another colour of a very diverse character, and bearing, in all probability, some chromatic ratio to that whose place it supplies. But how-

ever this be, it would be wrong in considering the pictorial effect of green, to leave out of view the natural gaiety of its lighter tints, and its pleasant associations (of which presently) with the merry season of spring.

After painting, there is no department of art in which contrasts of colours play a more remarkable part than in that of human DRESS. What a grand domain congruity here asserts, we have already seen. The realm of contrast is scarcely less extensive. One of the most important considerations for a lady studious of good effect in her attire (and all rightly constituted females are so studious), is to establish a proper relation between her complexion and those parts of her dress which are in juxtaposition with her face. Now, here the principle of contrast can often be introduced with very great effect; and that in a two-fold way. Either a feeble expression may be apparently elevated into a more distinct expressiveness, or a strong complexion may be tamed down into something more like that modesty which nature, in the very delicate element of colour, always seems studious to observe. If the colour on the cheek be fresh and strong, without any faulty excess, then the near proximity of green may be borne precisely as we find it in the richest pictures of the Venetian school—

‘Let the fair nymph on whose plump cheeks is seen
A constant blush, be clad in cheerful green;
In such a dress the sportive sea nymphs go;
So in their grassy bed fresh roses blow.’¹

¹ SOAME JENYNS, in his poem entitled the ‘*Art of Dancing*,’ as quoted by Mrs MERRIFIELD in her work, ‘*Dress as a Fine Art*,’ London, 1854.

But green and red are rich and vigorous colours, which not many women, in this age of unhealthy habits and feeble constitutions, will bear. When the complexion is weak and inefficient, very strong colours, placed in immediate contact with the face, will only make the deficiency of healthy sanguineous play more manifest. On the other hand, as has been well remarked by Mrs Merrifield, 'the semi-neutral tints which Quaker ladies so generally adopt, are very becoming to the complexion; and Titian, Vandyck, and other great painters, often introduce a drab-coloured scarf or veil around the bust of single figures, and in contact with the skin; for the effect of the drab scarf is to make the flesh-tints look brighter by contrast.' An excessively florid complexion, however, is always a very difficult matter to deal with. For if high-flushing colours be used in the immediate vicinity of the cheeks, with the view of overwhelming the strong tints of the cheek, the blaze of red will rather seem to be multiplied. Along with bright colours, I should therefore recommend to rubicund females a considerable general breadth and dispersion of head ornament, so as to distract the attention from the mere redness of the countenance. The utility of this may seem evident from the effect of the exact contrary, viz., a very florid face surrounded with the close edge of a white cap. Here the narrow plain white border could only serve more distinctly to set forth the flaming floridness of the complexion.¹

¹ For further details on this very interesting subject, I refer the reader to Mrs MERRIFIELD, to the lady quoted in the first discourse (p. 53 *supra*), and to a series of papers in BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE, entitled '*Æsthetics of Dress*.'

¹I will now conclude the survey of general æsthetic principles attempted in these Discourses, by noticing that much bespoken principle which the talents of two writers of great local celebrity have raised, at least in this corner of the intellectual world, into a very exaggerated importance ; I mean

THE ASSOCIATION OF IDEAS.

As a philosophical theory of beauty, the association system, so ingeniously advocated by Alison and Jeffrey, is altogether worthless. As an element in modifying our perceptions of the beautiful, in multiplying, to an indefinite extent, the pleasures which beautiful objects, by their own inherent virtue, are calculated to beget,

¹ After having travelled over such an extent of various artistic ground, a single word will now suffice to explain that much bespoken term the PICTURESQUE. There are many words in all languages that, inverting the natural process of verbal growth from the special to the general, start with a more comprehensive signification, and end with being limited to some species or sub-species of the genus or class which they originally contained. Thus in Greek *ἄλογον* which once signified any brute or unreasoning creature (*ζῷον* being understood), now signifies a horse, and *πτερινόν*, a winged creature, signifies a cock. In the same way *ἐπίσκοπος*, which once signified any overseer or superintendent, now signifies a special church officer in the Christian Church, possessing, in the estimation of those who love to magnify his office, functions and forms as definite as those which separate the judge in a civil court, from the advocate who pleads before his bar. Now PICTURESQUE, in the same way once signified generally any combination of forms, forces, and colour, suited for the purposes of the pictorial art ; just as SOLDATESQUE (*soldatesco*), signifies anything becoming the character of a soldier (*soldato*). But gradually this general comprehensiveness of the term came to be so limited that, in the English language at least, it is now used to designate a sub-species of the beautiful, and is a restrictive term, comprehending all those striking effects of nature with reference

and not seldom, also, in altogether destroying that fine faculty of appreciation which it has no power to excite, it has an extensive field of action, and deserves to be carefully considered. Like contrast, it may prevail so far as to make what is only plain appear positively comely, and to deprive positive ugliness of its power to repel; but it has no privilege of establishing a permanent law, and acts more in the capricious region of merely personal feeling, than in the steady temperature of normal human emotion. Love, like all violent personal emotions, deals much in association; and the east wind will be more benignant than the west, to a man who can say, in the words of the song, that '*there the bonnie lassie lives,*

to landscape painting, and those effects of dress and personal appearance in objects and groups of a comparatively small compass, which do not rise to the highest range of the sublime and beautiful. If this definition is correct (and I drew it out with great care, after comparing notes with a gentleman of great refinement and intelligence) then Mr Alison's idea ('*Essay on Taste*,' vol. i., Sixth Edition, p. 43), so far as it has any value, that picturesque objects are more rich in suggestive power, or more full of associations, is not excluded; for, in landscape painting, above all other departments of art, the 'striking effect' depends not merely on its own inherent elements of expression, but in the amount of additional human sentiment which, by the help of association, may be imported into it. A group of gypsies, for instance, is more picturesque in a wild landscape, than a group of ladies and gentlemen, not only from the manifest congruity of that wild people with the wild spot, and from the strangeness of their attire, and the riches, it may be, of their colouring, but, unquestionably, also, from the associations of their wild and adventurous life, which such a group never fails to excite. I do not allow, however, as will be seen in the immediately following pages, that mere association, though in a cumulative expression of beauty it will have its weight, is in any sense a *constituent* element, or a fundamental principle of æsthetic science.

the lass that I lo'e best.' But the more a man's taste is cultivated and raised into the region of pure knowledge, the more does he become independent of the thousand and one arbitrary, and irregular, and altogether fanciful combinations, of which the uncultivated or passion-possessed mind is so often the slave. For what is association? A man happens to be standing in the midst of a beautiful landscape, where an act of savage murder has been committed, or other gross offence against our finest moral feelings. Being of a very sensitive temperament, he is so moved by this exhibition of moral ugliness, that he can never think of the lovely scene again, without the hideous action being suggested to his imagination; consequently the beauty of that scene is utterly destroyed to him, at least for a season. The bloody association has ruined it. In an opposite way; a man happens to be walking in a highland glen of no particular beauty, whether of water, wood, or rock, or other feature; but he is not walking alone; there is a lovely confiding girl at his side, who 'looks songs into his face all day, and to whom he writes sonnets all night; from that moment, this very common hollow among the hills, becomes, in his eyes, the most beautiful of highland glens, in comparison of which Glen Rosa and Glen Sannox, are to be accounted of no more than Petrarch's 'Laura,' or even 'Helen of Troy,' is to be spoken of as incomparably fair, against his 'delightful Jessie.' Now, what would a reasonable man conclude from facts of this kind? Not that there is no difference in the beauty of landscapes, or degrees in the perfection of highland glens, but that very sensitive persons have very little control over their imaginations, and that

love is a very violent passion which, while it lasts, very strongly disturbs the judgment even of sound-minded men. But what conclusions do Mr Alison and Lord Jeffrey draw? that our notions of the beautiful depend altogether on individual associations; that one scene is not fundamentally more beautiful than another; that Glen Sannox is not really finer than any of the most common hollows among the bleak moors of the Merse; that every village Jessie is as fair as Helen of Troy; and that the Venus de Medici, in Florence, might be removed to-morrow, and the 'Hottentot Venus' put in her place, without violence to any scientific principle, or any eternal law of propriety, by which God has organized this glorious world which we inhabit. A congeries of arbitrary associations only would be thrown down; but their places would forthwith be supplied by another mountain or mole-hill of curiously aggregated fancies, to-morrow. The peculiar process of intellectual jugglery, by which these very graceful and ingenious writers deceived first themselves and then the people of Scotland generally, into a belief of these unnatural paradoxes, lies open even to a careless eye, on the polished pages which they have penned. There is a constant confusion of ideas between two things as essentially different as the relation between two partners in a mercantile firm is from the relation between father and son; between a lateral relation and a direct; between a voluntary connection and one that is altogether involuntary; between a fatherhood, essentially established by the fundamental organism of nature, and a mere chance acquaintanceship made in a railway trip, or soldered together by the artificial instrumentality of a lawyer's bond. In all

these cases, no doubt, there is a connection; but to designate them all in the heap by one such broad phrase as 'association,' is to use the English language in a way which renders all accurate thinking impossible, and opens a free door to every sort of elegant sophistry and accomplished trifling. It is, no doubt, quite true, in a loose sense, that a father is connected and associated with his son by generation. So the Supreme Being—with reverence be it spoken—is connected and associated with the world; but no sane man ever dreams of expressing that very close, intimate, and necessary relation which exists between father and son, or between God and the world, by the same word that familiarly expresses the loose connection that exists between the members of the Art Union, or the holders of stock in a railway. Alison, however, and Jeffrey had no scruple, in using the word association, to signify that necessary connection between inward powers and outward exhibitions in nature, which I have called expressiveness; and also that mere accidental relationship, which any the most unsubstantial whim in a dreamer's brain, may establish between itself and the whim of any other dreamer. No doubt, the deft editor of the *Edinburgh Review*, in the article BEAUTY in the 'Encyclopædia Britannica,' expressly distinguishes between 'natural signs and perpetual concomitants,' and 'arbitrary and accidental concomitants;' but the whole tendency and the practical upshot of his essay, is to confound these two things, so essentially different, under the common name of association, and to transfer the arbitrary characteristics of the latter class to the inherent verities of the former, whose existence is altogether beyond the domain of accident or convention. The public, accordingly,

which is an animal capable only of broad views and tendencies, allowed the theoretical distinctions to drop, and took the plain practical meaning of the curiously-twisted and ingeniously decorated discourse to be merely that of the old adage—*DE GUSTIBUS NON EST DISPUTANDUM*. Let every man fashion his own world of pleasant imaginations, according to his own fancy, and he has as much right as the great primeval Architect of the universe to look upon the finished work, and say that it is all very good.

That a sceptical system with regard to the τὸ καλόν, so directly hostile to all faith in a Divine order of things in the visible world, and so fundamentally the same as that of the old Attic sophists, successfully combated by Aristophanes and Plato more than 2000 years ago, should have been promulgated in religious Edinburgh at the beginning of this eighteenth century, with almost uncontradicted approval,¹ is a very notable fact in the

¹ The single notable exception that I know in the early part of the century (for Macvicar, Hay, Patterson, and myself, belong to another generation) is the late Sir GEORGE STUART MACKENZIE of Coul, who, in his '*Essay on some subjects connected with Taste*' (Edinburgh, 1817), successfully exposes the fundamental fallacy of Jeffrey's reasoning in the '*Encyclopædia Britannica*'; but the still small voice of wisdom was, in this, as in so many other cases, altogether overborne by the reverberations of critical rhetoric, and the power of popular names. The following passage on the philosophy of natural *expression*, as distinguished from *association*, goes to the root of the matter:—

'We should beware of confounding natural language, the result of certain laws of our nature, with associations which are voluntary, as Mr Jeffrey appears to do, when he makes the following observations:—"The most obvious, and the strongest associations that can be established between inward feelings and external objects, is, when the object is necessarily and universally connected with the feeling by the law of nature, so that it is always presented to the

history of human delusion, and deserves to be explained. The explanation, in my opinion, is a very simple one. There were three causes which tended to favour the growth, or rather which necessarily produced the growth, of this unhealthy state of Scottish opinion with regard to the Beautiful. The first cause lay plainly in the general irreligious and materialistic type of opinion which was dominant in this country during the last century, partly inherited from the court of Charles II. and the

senses when the feeling is impressed upon the mind—as the sight or the sound of laughter, with the feeling of gaiety—of weeping with distress—of the sound of thunder with ideas of danger and power.” We certainly never go through the process of *establishing*, as is here supposed, any connection that is *necessary*, or already *formed* by a law of nature. But without disputing about words, I beg leave to call the attention of the reader, for a moment, to what I conceive to be the proper distinction between natural language and speech. I am the more anxious to do this, because ordinary language has been called natural by Mr Alison (*Essays on Taste*, vol. ii., p. 35).

Natural language, according to my apprehension, consists in gesture, in certain modifications of the countenance, and in certain intonations of the voice. When a man is angry, he can express his emotion without the aid of speech, so as to be perfectly intelligible to the whole human race. Even the lower animals understand the expression of anger; and the extent to which natural language is common to them and to man, is much greater than most persons imagine. Without being taught, a child understands the stern configuration which displeasure gives to the countenance; and when the features relax into a smile of approbation, it is answered by a smile of pleasure. The meaning of sighs and groans is never misunderstood: weeping and laughing are expressions made use of by all nations to convey the same emotions. Indeed, every emotion which can be excited in us, has its expression in natural language. The opening of the features on the communication of pleasure; their contraction in consequence of pain; their distortion when we feel disgust and horror; the carriage of a man who is proud; the air of a man who is vain; the obsequiousness of a man who is cunning; are all consequences of what nature has implanted in us. Nature, too, has taught us to prostrate ourselves when we supplicate

low morality of the cavaliers,¹ and partly imported from France. This false philosophy, finding itself unable openly to sap the foundations of sound morals in this country, because of the firm aspect of resistance presented by the Church, asserted its power so much the more in the cognate domain of literature and philosophy; the result of which was the almost entire separation of this important sphere of intellectual action from the idea of GOD. This unnatural divorce, once effected, was made yet more wide by the narrow-mindedness and bigotry of the people of this country, especially of the Scotch section of them, in reference to theological opi-

the forgiveness of a Superior Being, and to raise our hands and eyes, when we wish to implore his favour. Natural language, in short, is universal. Artificial language, adapted to the organs of speech, was probably first used to facilitate a more extensive communication of certain emotions, which have their expression in natural language, but which expressions could not be conveyed to so great a distance as the sound of the voice; and afterwards to enable us to communicate our thoughts. Natural language may be said to express simply what we feel, artificial language that which we prefer, or wish to convey. The former, it is scarcely necessary to mention, must be distinguished from mimicry or pantomime. Feelings may be expressed in pantomime; that is, natural language may be imitated; but there is only one way of expressing certain feelings when they are actually excited in us. That which is a law of our nature cannot be dependent on association. When a child enters the world it cries; but no one ever thought of asserting that it does so, because the process of associating crying with pain is carried on in the mind of a new-born infant. If the connection between crying, and pain or distress, is to be called association, it is not that kind of association which is said to belong to matters of taste. This last is evidently supposed to be artificial; to be a voluntary, not a necessary exertion of our faculties.'

¹ Read KINGSLEY's admirable article, *Plays and Puritans*, in the *North British Review* for May 1856. The true heroes and the great ideal men of that day were the Covenanters, who, though they have not yet found a poet, can boast of a great painter, GEORGE HARVEY.

nion. Men of literature, science, and philosophy, if they were not quite orthodox in their views, found it much more convenient to ignore religion altogether in their publications, than by bringing forward the results of independent thought, to excite the opposition of a rancorous clergy, and the jealousy of an ignorant and Church-ridden population.¹ From one cause or another, therefore, the idea of GOD came to be habitually excluded from the intellectual exertations of the fine spirits who led the public mind at the end of the past century, and the beginning of that in which we now live; and with this exclusion, the keystone fell by which alone the arch of the Beautiful, in art as in nature, can be permanently supported. For if the fundamental principle of all art, as we have sufficiently shown, is the unity of an imperial and plastic intellectual force, asserting everywhere its inherent right of domination over an otherwise inform mass, so as to shape it into comeliness, it is plain that in a system of things which hangs so closely together as the world of which we are a part, the one original principle of Beauty must be identical with the one uncaused aboriginal, imperatorial Moulder of all lovely organisms of existence, whom we call GOD; and a scientific theory of Beauty, therefore, must have its roots, in common with all pure morality, in religious faith. The second cause of the growth of æsthetic scepticism in this country, was the character of the philosophy of Locke, harmonising as it did only too well with the character of the British people, and especially favouring the weak points of the English

¹ 'The English are said to be, and I believe they are, the most priest-ridden people on the face of the globe.'—DANIEL O'CONNELL, *Letter to Lord Cloncurry, 12th October 1837.*

intellect. The doctrine, that there are no innate ideas, though true in a certain sense, was only half the truth, with regard to the genesis of ideas that a mental philosopher should have taught, and was, unfortunately, also that half, to a contented acceptance of which the British people, immersed in the sensuous, the mechanical, and the practical, were naturally disposed. Locke, moreover, was plainly not at all an imaginative, or artistic man; he had nothing of the æsthetic element in his mental constitution, as is manifest, among other things, from the ignorant and unhandsome way in which he treats music, in his book on Education.¹ The tone of our Scotch philosophy, since it was brought into vogue by Reid, has been, in the main, decidedly Lockian; therefore, anti-æsthetic and anti-artistic. Here was clearly another cause, making Jeffrey and Alison what they were, and tending to banish the 'philosophy of taste' altogether out of the bright region of central divine truth, into the cloudy outer limbo of sentimental associations and ingenious conceits. But there was a third cause acting potently in this corner of the island, from which the English were preserved, partly by the historical traditions of Epis-

¹ 'Music is thought to have some affinity with dancing; and a good hand upon some instruments is by many people mightily valued. But it wastes so much of a young man's time to gain but a moderate skill in it, and engages him often in such odd company, that many think it much better spared; and I have, amongst men of parts and business, so seldom heard any one commended or esteemed for having much excellency in music, that, amongst all those things that ever came into the list of accomplishments, I think we may give it the last place.' This is the native utterance of the type-philosopher of 'a nation of shopkeepers,' money-makers, and muck-rakes. Plato and Martin Luther talked very differently.

copacy, partly by some lingering reminiscences of Cudworth and Smith, and old English Platonism, that were fitly conjoined with the study of mathematics in the University of Cambridge.¹ We are ecclesiastical democrats. We had pulled down the cathedrals, and, goaded by the insolence of a perjured king and a pedantic government, assassinated the bishops. Our whole soul was possessed by an intensely glowing, darkly smoking religious passion. Our dogma was stern. Our character was grave. We had proclaimed a divorce between religion and the fine arts, for no better reason than because their marriage had been celebrated by the Pope. Artistical beauty was to us, therefore, either only a pretty decorative trifle, or nothing at all. We had neither Madonna nor Venus de Medici to look at. Our good men only knew that the one was a Papist and the other a Heathen. We were, moreover, a very practical and a very utilitarian people. If we were zealous church-goers and catechisers on Sunday, we were equally intent on shop-keeping, and money-making, and toddy-drinking on Monday. In these functions we had exhausted our capacity: we had no room for the Beautiful. We plumed ourselves much on the correctness of our religious convictions, and much on our steady power of stern work—such work as this hard week-day world requires,—but we held exceedingly cheap what appeared to us the superficial graces of the sculptor's chisel and the painter's brush. With

¹ The Platonism of Cambridge still has its worthy representative in Professor Thompson, of that University, whose accurate notes to his edition of *Butler's Lectures on Greek Philosophy*, will always be prized by scholars.

these predispositions, we were prepared to receive any essay on Taste, or article on Beauty, that a dexterous writer might whisk into shape, however low might be the principle, and however shallow the sophism, on which it proceeded. Nay, we were perfectly content that ingenious and grave volumes on Beauty should be published, the avowed object of which was to prove that Beauty had no existence anywhere, save in the imagination of the spectator. Our people were ignorant; our clergy were indifferent; our professors were cold; our best men of culture lived under the freezing influence of the *Edinburgh Review*. Thus Beauty was publicly butchered in the streets of the 'Modern Athens,' in the beginning of the eighteenth century, as heretics were wont to be burnt in Rome; and no man wept.¹

¹ It was my intention in this place, while denying altogether its scientific significance, to have set forth the practical value of the principle of association, in bringing the artist into a living and effective relationship with the public whom he addresses. But as Jeffrey and Alison are full of illustrations of this subject, which, however false as the foundation for a philosophy of taste, have a meaning in them which will not fail to be wisely used by the wise, I shall content myself with making the following short observations in the form of a note:—(1.) A great part of the doctrine of association, as set forth by the Scottish sophistical school, according to the confusion of language mentioned in the text, the reader must not forget falls under the head of *Expressiveness*, and has been already fully discussed. Thus if an artist, in order to give the idea of motion to the head of a mercurial character, draws it turned upward, and to one side, as a person does when suddenly arrested by the approach of any unexpected appearance, he does so, in strict language, because, according to the structure of the human body, such a position is the *necessary expression of excited attention under such circumstances*; but more loosely, as Alison, and Jeffrey, and Stewart would say, because this position of the hand is 'associated

And now, gentlemen, I have done as much as from this place it was possible to attempt, in order to generate in your minds a more worthy conception of one of the great formative principles of the world, than you could have got from many of the sources to which you are in the custom of referring for information on matters of this kind. I hope, also, I have done something towards reinstating in your intellectual regard that great constructive genius, and 'god of the philosophers,' whom unkindly chances have long kept at too great a distance from the atmosphere of our Scottish universities. I hope you will feel yourselves now ready to gird up your loins for the perusal of the *Philebus*, and other master treatises of Plato, with some object more worthy of a rational being than hunting out an Atticism, torturing a various reading

with the idea of motion.' (2.) As the art of the poet is, in a great measure, nothing else than the gathering round some noble figure, or feeling, or thought, by the electric excitement of genius, such a congregation of kindred noble figures, feelings, or thoughts, as shall most richly embellish his theme, it is manifest that merely accidental associations, if skilfully used, may here be made to play, and do in fact often play, no inconsiderable part; and this, no doubt, is one of the facts which deceived Jeffrey and Alison into a belief in their twinkling sophism: they, in common with other writers on this subject, having had poetry, and its wide fields of familiar discursiveness, in their eye more directly than the more fixed and limited operations of the Fine Arts. Whatsoever beauty a thing has in itself, may evidently be increased indefinitely by calling up around it all the associations (of things in themselves not essentially ugly) with which it is commonly connected, or may be connected, in an agreeable way, by the inventive power of the artist. Hence arises the practical rule, that the more rich and varied an artist's experience of life is, the more capable will he be of doing justice to any theme which he may feel moved to magnify by his pencil or his pen. Wealth of associations is, therefore, by all means to be sought (for

or collecting pious contributions for a new theory of the optative mood. There is no ancient author, Greek or Latin, who is more admirably adapted than Plato to complement the deficiencies of our Scottish intellectual type; none, specially, from whose point of view you can more hopefully attempt the erection of a scientific doctrine of the Beautiful, of which, as men, as thinkers, and as Christians, you will have no cause to be ashamed. Nor think that this is a slight matter. Beauty is far too important an element in the framework of the universe, to allow of its scientific

it is, in fact, identical with wealth of ideas); and, when acquired, like everything else in art, it falls under those grand laws of unity and congruity, variety, contrast, etc., which preside over every exercise of the imaginative faculty; for without these laws it becomes a mere juggle. (3.) An artist must, by all means, beware of getting into devious and idiosyncratic habits of association; for any habit of this kind puts him out of harmony with those masses of men whose sympathies it is his business to evoke. The great antidote against this by no means uncommon disease, is knowledge of the world; a knowledge, however, which it is often very difficult for poet or painter to attain. Hence those sad mistakes in art which we daily deplore, arising not from want of ideal power on the part of the artist, but from want of familiarity with those common trains of thought with which the spectator's mind is possessed. Hence poets, like Wordsworth, who live among the mountains, and have no humour (a faculty which is peculiarly called out by converse with men), are very apt, in their moments of greatest solemnity, to say something that to the common reader appears ludicrous; perhaps, to certain minds, their whole subject may stir the risible faculty, and bring out a blunt '*This will never do!*' as the philosophic pedlar in the '*Excursion*' affected Lord Jeffrey. Byron, in the same way, who was a man of the world, did not fail to lay hold of a ludicrous point of vulgar association, when he designated Coleridge as '*the bard who soared to eulogise an ass.*' It is difficult for a certain order of intellects always to avoid offences of this description; as there is, on the other hand, a certain class of minds so trivial, that you can present to them no object, however remote

foundations being lightly laid by any serious thinking man. We live in an age when there is much writing and much reading, and an infinite amount of what is called criticism, both spoken and written. There is no harm in this, but rather much good; provided always it be done reasonably. Done capriciously, or without any fixed principles of procedure, and without a lofty purpose, I cannot argue much from it. It will only increase conceit and vain babbling. Before, therefore, you get into the habit of giving judgment on the merit of works addressed to the imaginative

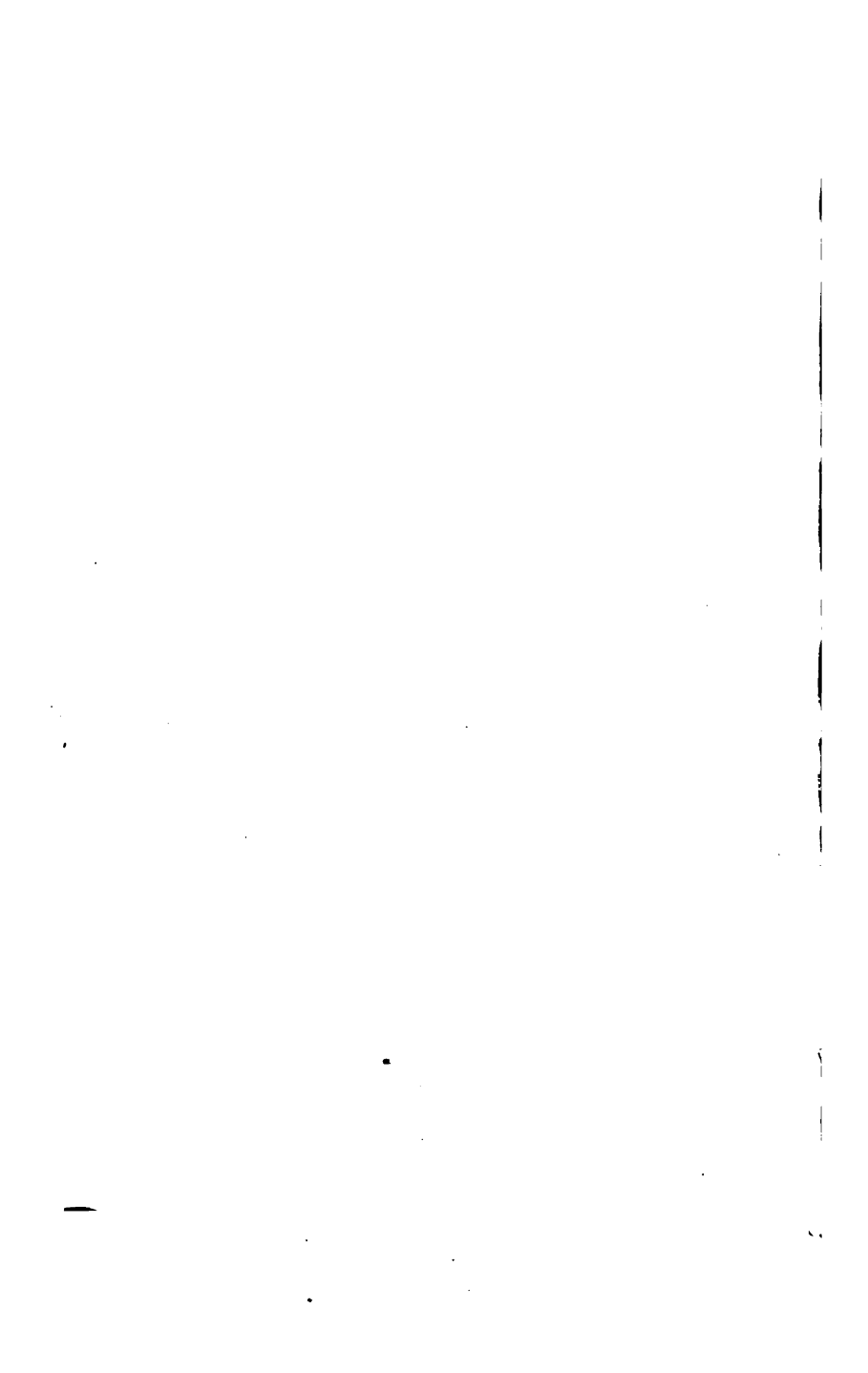
from vulgar trains of thought, to which they will not append some paltry fancy from the old toy-shop of their essentially puerile associations. The condition of these ill-conditioned creatures—some of whom, unfortunately, have an itch for criticism—has been well set forth by Coleridge, who, in his *Biographia Literaria*, describes a gentleman, whose only remark, on seeing Dannecker's beautiful statue of Ariadne at Frankfurt, was, that '*it was d—mned like Stilton cheese!*'—a blue spot or two in the marble having called up this association in his essentially vulgar mind. But though it is impossible for the artist to pay any regard to criticisms that may be made on his work from the lawless habits of association which belong to minds of this class, he ought always to bear in mind that he deals with a very motley and complex world, where things often come together under very curious conditions; and has certainly no reason to expect that people will give themselves much trouble to divert the usual stream of their thoughts, in order to bring themselves over to any remote position where he may choose to plant himself. As the superior mind, it is his business to realise the spectator's position; and he is a bungler in the use of words or symbols, who does not ask, in the first place, what thoughts they may raise in other men's minds, rather than what meaning they convey to his own. These indications seem sufficient for the guidance of the poet or painter, in helping him, if faithfully followed out, to bridge over the perilous gulf which always lies between the characteristic idealism of the truly artistic mind, and the realism which must always dominate, more or less tyrannically, in the mind of the mere spectator.

faculty, you should endeavour, by honest, conscientious, and protracted thought, to understand what the proper mission of that faculty is, and by what roots it is connected with all the best and most abiding elements of a harmoniously developed humanity. Depend upon it, till you are firmly convinced,—I do not care how you arrive at the conviction, whether by metaphysical analysis, or, what is better, by concrete experience, or by both, which is best ; but till you are convinced of the immutability of the principles of æsthetic perception, you will never ascend, in matters of literary and artistical criticism, beyond the habit of elegant trifling, and the dexterous trick of tongue-fence. A sound criticism can no more grow out of sceptical principles of taste, than a pure life from loose principles of morality. And when you do know what these principles are, and where the clear fountain is from which they flow, then assuredly, as in the pages of Plato, so in the experience of daily life, a feeling akin to the deepest convictions of religion will be mingled up with all your emotions of the Beautiful and the Sublime, both in nature and in human character. You will not then, as too many persons in this age, from lack of æsthetic training, are apt to do, be ready to meet with an incredulous smile every expression of sentiment with regard to beauty, which indicates a belief that there is something in that word which ought to touch the chord of reverence in our hearts, and the culture of which is not exempt from the high jurisdiction of an enlightened conscience. You will understand then, with a faith more strong than the indoctrination of the formal theologian can impart, that this world is not, as some one ex-

pressed himself, in a fit of ill-humour, a 'glorious blunder,' or a brilliant chaos; but that it is in very deed a magnificently organised system of symmetry and grace, as eternal as the Divine Mind, of which it is the expression.¹ In this world, everything which we see, or which we are, either is beautiful, or tends towards beauty, or has fallen away from beauty; a calculated tendency to, or normal aspiration after ugliness, is no part of the system of things to which we belong. Deformity is in no case the essential type, but only the accidental variety of created things.² And to recognise and exhibit in every various way, according to our capacity, that assemblage of essentially beautiful forms and forces by which we are surrounded, is our most exalted function, as belonging to that COSMOS, of which it is our honour and our glory to be the crown.

¹ 'Ο κόσμος εἰκὼν τοῦ νοητοῦ, Θεὸς αἰσθητός, μέγιστος, καὶ ἄριστος κάλλιστος τε καὶ τελειότατος γέγονε.—TIMÆUS, 92, B.

² 'Das SCHOENE ist die göttliche ursprüngliche Idee; und das HÄSSLICHE seine Negation hat eben als solche ein erst secundäres Daseyn. Es erzeugt sich an und aus dem Schönen.'—ROSENKRANZ on the Philosophy of the UGLY.



THE DOCTRINE
OF
THE BEAUTIFUL,
ACCORDING TO PLATO.

*Ueber das SCHOENE liegt der eigentliche Aufschluss im PHILEBUS
und im GASTMAHLE, die skeptische Vorbereitung etwa im grösserem
HIPPIAS, die mythische oder, wenn mann will, dichterische Aufstellung im
PHÆDRUS.'*

ARNOLD RUGE.

THE DOCTRINE
OF
THE BEAUTIFUL,
ACCORDING TO PLATO.

I HAVE thought it right to go into some detail with regard to the æsthetical doctrine of Plato, for two reasons : first, because the great apostle of 'the eternally good, beautiful, and true,' is the person to whom modern speculators will naturally feel inclined to go back, as to the highest authority on this subject ; secondly, because the æsthetical ideas of Plato, so far as they have been distinctly enunciated, do, in fact, form the only true basis of the philosophy of Beauty, and stand forward in an attitude of most decided hostility to the loose notions of the associationists, and other theorists, in modern times, who have done so much to bring down æsthetical science from that platform of necessary truth, where it was planted by the great thinkers of antiquity. My object in this part of my book, therefore, is, as it were, to build a bridge over the gulf of centuries, which intervenes between the master-thinker of the Greeks and the most recent advocates of the only true doctrine of the Beautiful in this

country. I wish to help Mr RUSKIN, Mr HAY, Dr MACVICAR, and all who think with them, to stretch the right hand of fellowship to Plato with a more firm grasp, and a more palpable recognition. I must, however, warn these gentlemen, and such of the general public as are interested in the history of æsthetical science, not to expect from the great philosopher of innate ideas, a complete and systematic exposition of the science of the Beautiful. Mr ZELLER, in his admirable work on Greek Philosophy, has remarked, with perfect truth, that 'a theory of art did not lie in the plan of Plato.'¹ We may say, indeed, that the Greeks generally were little inclined to speculate curiously on the doctrine of Beauty, just because they were so firmly in possession of it. The last thing men begin to analyse, is the composition of the healthy atmosphere which they breathe. Let the atmosphere only become unhealthy; let cholera, and putrid fever, and pestilence be generated: and then curious thinkers, stimulated by social necessities, may be brought, from the stars above their heads, and the flowers at their feet, to study the nature of that subtle invisible fluid by which the vital substance of their lungs is permeated. But the æsthetical atmosphere which Plato and the ancient Athenians breathed in the generations immediately succeeding Phidias, was the purest that has been known in the history of the world. In this region, therefore, for a great practical reformer (for such Plato unquestionably was), there was nothing to do. The moral atmosphere, on the other hand, was at that same period, in many respects,

¹ Vol. ii., p. 304.

one of the most corrupt that the world has ever seen. A sensuous religion, an unbridled liberty, and an excitable temperament, incarnated, to the modern eye, most distinctly in the familiar character of Alcibiades, combined to make the ancient Athenians, in their most highly cultivated age, one of the most immoral and unprincipled people of which history preserves any record. Their most celebrated statesmen were tainted with venality and treachery. Aristides became a sort of miracle, merely because he was just; and the art of talking cleverly was raised into the dignity of a separate profession, which made character a secondary consideration in public men, and sobriety a stranger to the most serious deliberations of public life. Brought up in the midst of such a society, full of all kinds of sounding juggle and unsubstantiality, Plato, striving with a holy earnestness after reality and truth in all things, had enough to do with laying the intellectual foundation of a grand philosophical edifice, of which the whole type, character, and tendency was ethical. Accordingly, we find in his great concluding work, the Republic, the imposing outline of a social polity, which is at once Church and State, and of which, therefore, our modern political writers, not always overburdened with piety, have often failed to comprehend the significance. For the composition of a separate purely scientific theory of the Beautiful, as it might be elaborated by a modern German professor, Plato had little inclination, and less time. What he has written, therefore, on this or other purely artistic subjects, is either only in the way of getting a popular starting-point for a serious moral discussion (as in the Gorgias,

where eloquence is the ostensible subject), or in an easy tentative sort of fashion, as in the greater Hippias, by way of clearing the ground for a scientific discussion of a subject, contemplated indeed, but—from the pressure, no doubt, of what appeared to the author more necessary duty—never realised.

There exist, moreover, altogether independently of these considerations, very weighty reasons for the belief, that, even had Plato attempted a complete theory of Poetry and the Fine Arts, it would have been far from a satisfactory one. For, however wonderfully the concrete faculty of the poet was combined in the rich soul of this man with the abstract analysis of the scientific thinker, it is quite plain, from the manner in which poetry is spoken of in various parts of his writings, that the style of thought which he had assumed, or rather the intellectual attitude into which he had been driven, was anything but favourable to a just appreciation of poetry and the fine arts. Admirably as the poetic element of his ample intellect rolls and blossoms in the Phædrus, and careers and capers in the Banquet,¹ it is manifest that with Plato poetry is, after all, nothing but a merely decorative art, which gives, indeed, a rich grace to the walls of his strong palace of intelligential truth, but belongs not essentially, in any sense, to the architecture which he has raised. In explaining Plato's relation to poets and poetry, it is, unfortunately, only a small part of the truth to say that Homer was banished from the Republic only because he was a bad theologian. It is rather quite certain that, independently of this alto-

¹ 'The BANQUET, the most beautiful and perfect among all the works of Plato.'—SHELLEY'S *Essays*, vol. i., p. 70. London, 1840.

gether, poets generally, and all men who live by imaginative imitation, are very scurvily treated by Plato; that he is, in fact, too much of a high notionalist, on the one hand, and of a hard realist, on the other; that, while the model-man with him always was the philosopher, the veritable type on earth of the all-surveying, and all-controlling Jove in heaven, he considered the artist to have got, perhaps, a little more than his due, when he was placed, in a graduated scale of human excellence, a single step above the artisan. Such a graduated scale occurs in the *Phædrus*, in that well-known passage, where the souls of men are represented as being driven about in the supercelestial places in company with the gods, in order to be furnished with those primary intuitions, and enjoy 'that blissful vision and spectacle,' altogether destitute of which no normal human being can come into existence.¹ According to this scale, the highest style of human being is a 'φιλόσοφος ἢ φιλόκαλος ἢ μουσικός τις καὶ ἐρωτικός,' (a man of philosophical and general culture, and specially fond of beauty, and very susceptible of the passion of love.) Now, this definition seems, at first sight, broad enough to include poets and painters, and those who occupy themselves anyhow with the representation of beautiful forms; but it is clear, not only from the enumeration which follows in this passage, but from the manner in which all dramatic writers are treated in the *Republic*, that the great philosopher was possessed by a special crotchet (as the greatest minds are not always free from such²) against

¹ Πᾶσα ἀνθρώπου ψυχὴ φύσει τιθέσθαι τὰ ὄντα, ἣ οὐκ ἂν ἤλθεν εἰς τὸδε τὸ ζῶον.—*Phædrus*, 250, A.

² Witness Luther's crotchet about consubstantiation, Goethe's,

the whole tribe of imaginative imitators. No doubt, in the *Ion*, he handles both rhymers and rhapsodists with a refined delicacy, when he attributes their pleasing performances to a 'divine madness,' and says expressly that 'A POET IS A BUOYANT, AND A WINGED, AND A SACRED CREATURE';¹ but in the *Phædrus*, he enunciates with more consistency his real sentiments, when he says, that 'with good reason the intellect of the philosopher only is entitled to be talked of as WINGED,' *δικαίως μόνη πτεροῦται ἡ τοῦ φιλοσόφου διάνοια*.² In fact, how could a grave philosopher seriously esteem the poetic art, if he was quite serious in believing that a poet is such only in proportion as 'the intellect departs from him, and he loses the use of his reason?'—

ἐκφρων γένηται, καὶ ὁ νοῦς μηκέτι ἐν αὐτῷ ἐστίν.³ These phrases, indeed, might have been taken in a jocular way, or even as a paradoxical compliment, had not the writer in so many other places shown what a wide gulf there lay between him and the whole class of men to whom Homer, and Æschylus, and Aristophanes belonged. To return to the graduated scale of human excellence in the *Phædrus*; after the philosopher comes the legitimate king, military commander, or governor; then the statesman, economist, or merchant; fourth, the master of gymnastic, or physician, exercised with maintaining the health of the

against all questions of Church and State (the very reverse of Plato's), and Lord Bacon's, against all methods of interrogating nature but his own. Aristotle is one of the few great minds that I know who is altogether free from crotchets; and this only, I imagine, because he is altogether destitute of passion.

¹ *Κοῦφον γὰρ χρῆμα ποιητής ἐστὶ καὶ πτηνὸν καὶ ἱερὸν*.—*Ion*, 534, B.

² *Phædrus*, 249, C.

³ *Ion*, 534, B.

body; fifth, the soothsayer and hierophant; sixth, the poetic man, or whoever else is occupied with representative arts (ποιητικὸς, ἢ τῶν περὶ μέμησιν τις ἄλλος); seventh, the mechanic and the farmer; eighth, the sophist and the demagogue (σοφιστικὸς ἢ δημοτικὸς); and ninth, the tyrant, or unconstitutional sovereign. Now, it appears to me very plain that a writer who in such decided language expresses his comparative contempt for all the arts of imaginative representation, would scarcely have done justice to the philosophy of the fine arts, had he attempted it. All that we can expect from him, according to the analogy of his whole philosophy, is a hearty and complete recognition of the DIVINE FACT OF BEAUTY AS THE GRAND FORMATIVE PRINCIPLE OF THE UNIVERSE; and this is what we unquestionably do receive, both in the way of general enunciation, and in the distinct statement of some of the most important phases of that great fact, so lovingly and so reverentially accepted as divine.¹

¹ The only way in which Plato's misprision of poetry and poets can be defended, is by saying that he takes up the position of an earnest lover and practiser of truth, a philosopher, as opposed to all sorts of mere talkers, and unprincipled retail-dealers in graceful words which mean nothing, rhetoricians, poets, and mere literary men generally; and that he was justified in assuming this position in a city which abounded more in brilliant vain-talkers of all sorts, than any which has performed a prominent part in the history of the world. But this view of the case, though it may explain his polemical attitude towards rhetoricians and poets, can never justify his inadequate views as a philosopher. The countryman of Æschylus and Simonides, Theognis and Pindar, had no right to assume that poets, as such, had nothing to do with wisdom, with σοφία, and φρόνησις, and σωφροσύνη, or that these were, in their best sense, the peculiar property of the philosophers. And if the mere poet was a contemptible butterfly-caricature of humanity, the mere philosopher might as easily be metamorphosed into the likeness of a

I shall now proceed to give a short analysis of the contents of those dialogues of Plato which bear more directly on the subject of Beauty; ending, in each case, with a statement of the æsthetical results, whether of a negative or of a positive kind, which they may seem either expressly to contain, or fairly to imply.

I. THE GREATER HIPPIAS.

In this dialogue, Hippias, the famous professor of wisdom,¹ from Elis in the Peloponnesus, is introduced, on his arrival at Athens, as laid hold of by Socrates, ever on the watch to find a person of real or pretended intelligence, with whom he might enter into subtle argumentative conversation about the principles of

spider. The fact is, that Plato's views of dramatic art and literature generally, as expressed in the Republic, are just as one-sided and unreasonable as those of some very religious people in modern times. These men have placed religion exactly on the same exclusive throne whereon Plato set philosophy, scarcely deigning to acknowledge literature but as a serviceable decorator; nevertheless, the genuine literary man has a moral purpose in his life as well as the philosopher or the preacher, and the poems of a true poet are not poetry only, or a pretty sport of the imagination, in the trivial sense of the word, but religion also, and philosophy, and virtue, and every most noble quality of which man is capable in conception or in act. That I have not overstated Plato's misprision of poets and poetry, may be seen by anyone who will consult E. MÜLLER'S *Geschichte der Theorie der Kunst bei den Alten*. Breslau, 1834. Vol. i., p. 27.

¹ This, to those who are anxious to avoid misunderstanding from modern associations, will be found to be the most suitable translation of the famous word σοφιστής, of which our English *sophist* is the impure echo.

the highest human philosophy. The perambulatory lecturer from Elis comes upon the dialectic stage of Athens with a gay attire and a jaunty air, and a look as of one who had an answer ready for any, the most puzzling questioner, who might be willing to make trial of his wisdom. After some rambling conversation about the remarkable ability displayed by the σοφισταί, the great fortunes they had made by public teaching, and the reputation which not a few of them had enjoyed even for political wisdom, to which are added some curious remarks on the characteristic conservatism of the Spartan people, who would have nothing to do with wisdom, except in so far as it agreed with the hereditary use and wont of the narrow valley of the Eurotas, Hippias proceeds to inform Socrates of a discourse which he had lately delivered to the Spartans on the question,—*What are those honourable and noble occupations and exercises in which a youth, being well trained, may hope to achieve a reputable life?* The word used in this question,—ποῦρά ἐστι καλὰ ἐπιτηδεύματα,—is the very word, καλός, which is traceable in so many English compounds in its signification of sensuous beauty, but which in Greek floated continually, with a very indefinite sort of sway, between the meaning of the English word, BEAUTIFUL, and that of the Latin word, HONESTUS, *honourable*, which we have retained in certain well-known passages of the New Testament. A word of such comprehensive ambiguity was the very text which Socrates was ever eager to find, in order to preach from it his great intellectual gospel of clear ideas on general terms expressive of familiar moral and intellectual qualities. He accordingly tells Hippias that the mention of the subject of

his Lacedæmonian discourse had reminded him of a difficulty with which he had been lately puzzled in regard to the nature of the BEAUTIFUL, or τὸ καλόν; and hé professes a great desire to make the best use he can of the presence of such a master of wisdom as Hippias, in order to rid himself of the puzzling doubts with which he had been perplexed. The glib-tongued Elean, of course, is quite ready to enter into the desired discussion, though the nice method of exact question and answer, in which the son of Sophroniscus delighted, was a somewhat more severe test of his attainments than that to which they were commonly subjected. The dialogue accordingly begins; and the professor of wisdom, whose ignorance is in the course of the discussion to be fully exposed, is after a fashion that occurs, unfortunately, more than once in Plato, made to appear a great deal more ignorant of the subject than there was any necessity, so far as we can judge, for making him appear. The reason of this impropriety is manifestly this, that with Plato the complete exhibition of a dialectic process of investigation was a matter always of primary importance, to which dramatic verisimilitude is often sacrificed. Hippias, therefore, is made to start with such a very obvious piece of Bœotian stupidity, as the confounding of the two questions, τί ἐστὶ καλόν; and δὲ τί ἐστὶ τὸ καλόν; *what thing is beautiful?* and *what is the BEAUTIFUL?* though, while doing so, in fact, he does nothing more logically false than, in our own land and time, many an honest, sound-headed, but unspeculative Christian might do, who, if he were asked, *What is religion?* might give an answer descriptive of Anglicanism, Presbyterianism, or any other specific mani-

festation of the general term sought. Hippias will, doubtless, find many quick sympathisers when, in answer to the question, *What is the beautiful?* he answers, with a broad joyous confidence, *παρθένος καλὴ καλόν— a beautiful young lady is beautiful!* But Socrates, not being of that class of questioners, who might be willing to take a light laugh out of such an answer, and let the real argument go by, presses the point—*If there be in the world not only a beautiful virgin, but a beautiful horse, a beautiful lyre, and a beautiful pitcher, and manifold other beautiful objects, what is that common quality in which things so strikingly diverse all agree, and which makes them all susceptible of a common appellation?* Hippias, of course, at once admits that there are infinite individual things of all kinds which possess beauty in some degree; but, being anxious to take his stand on his first example, says that all the most beautiful things in the world of nature and art are tame, and not worth mentioning, in comparison of a really beautiful young woman. Well, then, rejoins Socrates, since you have introduced the element of comparison, *is not even the most beautiful of mortal women plain, when compared with the perfect and unfading beauty of the immortal gods?* a question which the Elean very properly and very piously answers in the affirmative. The relative question being thus dismissed, the real point is urged anew, *τί δοκεῖ σοι αὐτὸ τὸ καλὸν ᾧ καὶ ἅλλα πάντα κοσμεῖται καὶ καλὰ φαίνεται;*—*What is that essentially beautiful element which adorns all individual beautiful things, and makes them appear beautiful?* Hippias, unprepared with an answer, as wiser men have often been, to such a profound interrogation, thinks to get off with another very superficial proposition, felt

no doubt by himself to be a silly joke, though he might have been willing enough to have it taken in earnest. The beautifying principle of which you are in search, said he, is not far off; for there is certainly one thing in this world that adorns everything which it touches, and that thing is GOLD. This, therefore, may perhaps be our universal element of beauty!—Well, says Socrates, quite seriously, if so, Phidias was not the great sculptor we imagine; for if gold were the beautifying element, he would have made the whole statue of Pallas in the Parthenon of gold, whereas it is partly gold and partly ivory, and the eyes are of stone. This very obvious criticism necessarily leads to the elimination of something like an æsthetical principle, in the shape of the *τὸ πρέπον*, the BECOMING, or the SUITABLE; for Hippias, of course, modifies his assertion of the beautifying virtue of gold by coupling it with the constant limitation of suitableness and propriety. Here, therefore, is a germinative point from which a very comprehensive philosophy of the Beautiful might have been worked out, much in the same way that Aristotle, in his Nicomachean Ethics, afterwards caused all the most fertile ideas of practical morality to crystallise round the single principle of the golden mean; but in this Platonic dialogue there is not the slightest desire shown to keep hold of a fruitful principle once started. Unfortunately, also, this very word *πρέπον*, though more special and significant than *καλόν*, contains an ambiguity leading no less certainly into fatal confusion; as we see in English also, that the word *suitable* may mean either *adaptability of means to an end*, or *congruity of a part with a whole*, or again, of *any artistic imitation with the nature of the thing imitated*. Socrates, accord-

ingly, whose object through the whole dialogue seems rather to probe Hippias than to fasten upon truth, immediately puts the strictly æsthetical sense of the word *πρέπον* out of view, by asking, *whether to a beautiful pot full of excellent pottage a golden ladle would be more suitable, or one made of the wood of the fig-tree?* The answer which he himself gives to this question, viz., that the latter would be more suitable, because a golden one, when used for stirring, might crack the pot, and discharge the porridge, and put out the fire, shows plainly enough that it is only the utilitarian and most vulgar sense of *πρέπον* which he has in view. Hippias, who seems to have no faculty of dealing with a verbal subtlety, being, in fact, intended to stand as the type of a man, full of information and discourse, but without discernment, is again obliged to confess, that, if the beautiful be the suitable, fig-tree wood may, in certain cases, be more beautiful than the all-worshipped gold. Eager, however, to escape from the region of dialectical bristles with which Socrates is hedging him round, he comes forward boldly with one of those broad practical propositions about the *καλόν*, which he felt fully assured would instantly command the assent of every reasonable person. ‘What I say is this, that always, and to every man, and in every place, it is best and most beautiful (here again we labour under the ambiguity of the word *καλόν*) for a man to live wealthy and in good health, and honoured by his fellow-citizens; and when he has reached a good old age, having first laid out decently the bodies of his parents dying before himself, to be then decently interred by his own offspring.’ To this Socrates at once objects, that, in this case, neither Achilles nor any of the sons of the gods

could be looked upon as in possession of the highest bliss, because they neither buried their own parents, nor were buried by their own children. The argument being thus again brought back from vague popular realities to the strictness of logical conception, Socrates recurs to the idea of the τὸ πρέπον, what is seemly and suitable, as being, perhaps, the most essential element in our conception of the Beautiful; but no sooner has he assumed this position, than he is tormented by another doubt very natural to a philosophical mind, *whether beauty consists in a show or a reality?* whether what is called *seemly*, in common parlance, is not altogether a matter of mere *seeming*, and of course a thing very different from that eternal reality of beautiful essence, the vision of which alone can form a worthy exercise for the philosophic faculty? Hippias, in consistency with the sceptical principles professed by many of his fellow rhetoricians, being obliged, when pressed, to admit that the seemliness (always the same word τὸ πρέπον) is rather a matter of fair *seeming*, than of beautiful *being*, Socrates at once dismisses the πρέπον, and sets himself with invincible perseverance to hunt out some other principle. He immediately stumbles on the τὸ χρήσιμον, or the USEFUL, a principle by which it is plain, at the very outset, that the æsthetical investigation cannot be advanced a step, but rather driven back. 'Are those eyes beautiful,' he next says, 'which seem to be such, though they have no capacity of seeing, or not rather such as have really a seeing power in them, and are useful for sight?—οἱ ἂν δυνατοὶ τὲ καὶ χρήσιμοι πρὸς τὸ ἰδεῖν;—so with the legs and the arms, and with all the members of the body, with horses, dogs, and cocks, with musical instruments, poetry, and the arts,

with laws, trades, and professions, always and everywhere, the being serviceable for a purpose is the essential condition of beauty, and the more serviceable the more beautiful.¹ Now, this capability of producing a result, which is the inherent quality of all things and creatures held to be beautiful, depends upon some innate virtue or power, *δύναμις*; therefore, effective energy is always beautiful, and weakness always ugly, *δύναμις μὲν ἄρα καλόν, ἀδυναμία δὲ αἰσχρόν*. Hippias, of course—there being, in fact,² an important element of truth in the statement—assents; but Socrates immediately, with his restless inquisitive eye, pounces on a fatal objection to his own argument; for is it not certain that both men and boys are always blundering and sinning, and never without a certain power or energy which produces the blunders and the sins? Mere energy, therefore, however skilfully applied to achieve an end, cannot be *τὸ καλόν*: otherwise the most accomplished blackguard will be the most accomplished gentleman, which neither Hippias, nor Socrates, nor Sir William Hamilton, believed. It follows, therefore, that a qualified definition of beauty be given to the following effect:—‘*The useful and the effective (τὸ δυνατὸν) directed to the achievement of a good end, are the beautiful*,’ in other words, the advantageous or the beneficial, *τὸ ὠφέλιμον* is the *τὸ καλόν*. Then follows a very poor quibble, of which there are unfortunately

¹ The identity of the good, the beautiful, and the serviceable, is distinctly asserted by Socrates in the conversation with ARISTIPPUS.—*Xen. Memorab.* iii. 8, and iv. 6, 9; all this miserable confusion of ideas being everywhere facilitated by the very comprehensive meaning of the Greek word *καλός*.

² P. 74, *supra*.

not a few in the dialogues of Plato, and always put into the mouth of Socrates. According to the definition now given, the Beautiful appears to be the cause or the father of the GOOD; but the cause is a different thing from the effect, and the son cannot be identical with the father: therefore, neither is the beautiful good, nor the good beautiful; and we are again brought to a non-plus. Hippias, with his usual undiscerning compliance, assents: so the useful, and the efficient, and the beneficial, are sent into a common limbo with the *τὸ πρέπον*; and the investigation commences afresh. Socrates now starts a new, and by no means an unfruitful idea, on which the reader is requested to keep his eye, as it will appear again in the *PHILEBUS*. 'The beautiful,' says the sage, 'is the sum of those pleasurable sensations which we receive through the senses of seeing and hearing'—*τὸ καλὸν ἐστὶ τὸ δι' ἀκοῆς τε καὶ ὄψεως ἡδύ*. But satisfactory as this definition seems to be at first sight, and prophetic as it certainly is of some æsthetic results, when narrowly looked into it is found to contain problems beyond the reach of either sage or sophist to solve. No doubt it contains one essential element, that of *pleasurable emotion*, omitted in the previous definition; it also points directly to the fine arts, by naming the two senses which are the grand inlets of all impressions commonly called beautiful;¹ but it is liable, as the subtle Greek dialectician does not fail to observe, to this serious preliminary criticism:—Why, in this matter, are only two of the senses mentioned?

¹ 'Æsthetic science specially embodies the inherent principles which govern impressions made on the mind through the senses of HEARING and SEEING.'—D. R. HAY, *Science of Beauty*.

Are we not capable of receiving pleasurable impressions by feeling as well as by seeing; and why should we confine the term beautiful to the impressions of one sense more than to those of another? Is not the smell of a rose as pleasant as the sight? and may there not be an æsthetics of smell as well as of sound? Out of this difficulty Socrates helps himself by no means in a manner worthy a professor of dialectics; and then there is another point, which creates no less serious a difficulty, and gives rise to a page or two of very subtle and (so far as the question at issue is concerned) most unprofitable quibbling. The question is put,—*If seeing and hearing give rise to sensations both by universal consent falling under the category beautiful, what is that common element possessed by both and each, in virtue of which beauty may be predicated of both and each?* And the answer finally arrived at is nothing more than this apparently obvious truism, that the pleasures of sights and sounds are the most harmless, and the best of all pleasures; in other words, the *beautiful is advantageous or beneficial pleasure*, the discarded *ὠφέλιμον* being recalled and joined with the new idea of the pleasurable, τὸ καλὸν ἐστὶ ἡδονὴ ὠφέλιμος. But this composite definition is evidently liable to the same quibbling objection which was made to the simple *ὠφέλιμον*; for the Beautiful will still in this way be the generative cause of the good, and as cause is different from effect, neither will the good be beautiful, nor the beautiful good; and thus we are entangled in a contradiction as before. At this impotent conclusion, Hippias (as would be the case with any honest John Bull at the present hour) can contain himself no longer. He tells

Socrates to give over the foolish practice of clipping words; that such disputations are barren of all results; that a practical man will find much more profitable employment in speaking on affairs of real life in the law courts, or in the senate-hall; that, in fact, the real καλόν, the only object worthy of a noble manly ambition, is to state your case with such dexterity of words before a popular audience as to gain your cause; and that a person occupying himself with such minute quips and cranks of dialectic conceit, though he may wish to give himself out for a philosopher, will most certainly pass current as a fool. This brings the discussion to an end: Socrates laments his unfortunate destiny in being condemned constantly to fret his brain with difficult questions to which he can find no answer; feels himself necessitated, however, to follow out to some satisfactory conclusion the inquiries concerning the τὸ καλόν which he had commenced; and consoles himself, in departing, by repeating the old proverb, χαλεπὰ τὰ καλά, or, as the Latins have it, OMNIA PRÆCLARA RARA. *One thing at least I have learned from this discussion, that to arrive at one great ruling principle of the Beautiful is not so easy as some clever people imagine.*

The remarks that require to be made on this very tantalising and unsatisfactory dialogue are very obvious, and are demanded more for the sake of Plato than for the sake of the subject. In order to pass a judgment on a composition of this kind—and there are not a few such in our author—the plain practical Englishman must bear in mind, that the subtle Greek was writing for a very different purpose than that for

which our English readers, in nine hundred and ninety-nine cases out of a thousand, are accustomed to read. We read for information; Plato wrote to stimulate the thinking faculty: and if this end be distinctly kept in view, it will appear that the dialogue is by no means so barren of results as it may at first sight appear. We may compare it, indeed, to a hurried run across the moors, undertaken by a couple of sportsmen for the sake of starting game, only that a general idea may be formed of the prospects of the autumnal campaign. Taken in this light, the object of the dialogue may be considered to have been to bring before the thoughtful reader the following points for the sake of mental discipline:—

1. What do we mean by the words, SEEMLY and SUITABLE; and what is the difference between suitability for attaining a practical end, and suitability for making an æsthetical impression?

2. How far are the words, UTILITY, ADVANTAGE, and BEAUTY, identical or different?

3. In how far does the principle of RELATION to ourselves affect our estimate of absolute Beauty?

4. Is Beauty a matter of apparition merely, or is there an unseen substratum and solid framework of the Beautiful, so to speak, which is one of the eternal realities of intelligential existence; and if this eternal substratum of the Beautiful exists, how far is it cognisable by the human intellect?

5. What is the nature of the connection between the Beautiful and the Good? and is it possible that anything should be æsthetically beautiful which produces evil results?

6. What is the nature of that pleasurable emotion

which unquestionably accompanies the perception of the Beautiful?

7. What is that peculiarity of the senses of seeing and hearing which renders the impressions conveyed by them the mother of highly intellectual arts, while the pleasures of the other senses remain confined to the sensuous region where they had their root, and pass away in momentary stimulation?

To any reader who is desirous of exercising his mind on the subject of the highest instincts of our nature, it is manifest that a dialogue, distinctly and vividly raising all these questions, must act as a powerful stimulant to thought; but with such readers as we find everywhere in these times, who expect thoughts to be poured into their empty souls, as beer is poured into casks, a discussion that results only in propounding a series of puzzling questions can produce nothing but disappointment and vexation. I have no hesitation, however, in saying that if the old Platonic method of commencing the discussion of a great subject, by raising a number of perplexing problems, were revived with vividness and vigour in our schools and colleges, a method of teaching infinitely superior to the common method of professorial lecture, or tutorial drill, would be the result. In the much-neglected science of *Paedutics* (as Professor PILLANS calls it), the maxim should be laid down and followed out consistently, that where there is no exercise, there is no education.

For some part of the unsatisfactory feeling produced by this dialogue, the circumstance must also be taken into account, that besides the main object of starting æsthetic ideas, the writer had manifestly the distinct

and separate one of making the professor of wisdom appear foolish. For this purpose, it is on every occasion sufficient if a problem is raised which the vain-glorious disputant is unable to solve. Socrates does not profess wisdom; he is only an inquirer. That he should know nothing is natural; that the other party should be forced to the same humiliating confession, is, in one view, the purpose of the discourse. Pity only that the victory should seem to lose more than half its value, by being gained over an adversary, whose faculty of resistance is so feeble; pity also that the philosopher's passion for the strict method of scientific investigation should degenerate sometimes into a method that looks rather like playing dexterously with his tools, than doing seriously a solid piece of intellectual work.¹

¹ With regard to the Hippias, the observations of a recent German writer may be quoted. 'The apparent want of a satisfactory result in many Platonic dialogues does not arise from the author having proposed a series of riddles, which, as the most recent interpreters conceive, he either knew not how to answer himself, or put forth in humoursome wantonness to torment the reader, but they are all preparatory to other dialogues wherein the problem is fully explained; and in the general case, also, there are hints enough to the attentive reader, even in the problematic dialogues, of the solution which is afterwards to be offered.'—MUNK: *die Natürliche Ordnung der Platonischen Schriften*. BERLIN, 1857. *Einleitung*, p. 9. The same writer says (p. 149) that 'the real object of the greater Hippias was to show to all who, like the Elean sophist, separated the Beautiful from what is morally Good, that what they call beauty is not real beauty; but that the really Beautiful is identical with the really Good, and consists in the harmony of the outward and inward man, of knowing and of acting.' To this, as a statement of the implied back-thought in the dialogue, I have no objections; and we shall see immediately from the Phædrus, that anything like an analytic separation of the BEAUTIFUL in form from the TRUE in knowledge, and the GOOD in action, did not lie in the

II. THE PHÆDRUS.

This dialogue, so universally and so deservedly popular,¹ presents a perfect contrast to the *Hippias*. The one is like the dexterous fence of a clever sword-master in a cause with which he is only playing, and with an adversary whom it would be treating in too complimentary a fashion to push him to a close grapple; the other is, as it were, the high hymn and holy consecration of the soul, when girding itself for the championship of all that is dearest and most sacred to humanity. In its literary form, it may be called a discourse *on the nature and effects of LOVE in a reasonable soul*; the nature of this highest passion including by necessity a philosophical account of the nature of

harmoniously-combining character of Plato's mind; and it is a fact, of which any one may convince himself at the present hour by observation, that Beauty in a human being cannot be bestowed by the presence of mere symmetry of form, and delicate play of colour; but that intelligence and goodness are absolutely necessary, forming that characteristic expression which Lord Byron properly called the soul of beauty. Hence the ambiguity of the word *καλός*, which has caused us so much trouble in this dialogue, does in fact conceal a difference of analytic thought; which in the complete stage of concrete existence necessarily becomes a unity; and the admirable pictures of brute life by our great artist LANDSEER may be quoted as a very apt illustration, to show that even animal beauty of the most perfect kind will not, by mere transference to canvas, make the most perfect kind of animal painting; but animal beauty is then most interesting, when, by the cunning of a great artist, the unreasoning animal is invested with all that depth of moral and intellectual significance which properly belongs to the reasonable creature MAN.

¹ 'Was eine gelungene Overtüre für ein gutes Tonstück, das ist der *Phædrus* für Plato's Werke.'—ACKERMANN über das Christliche in PLATO.

the human soul generally; and the impassioned utterance which belongs to a reasonable love, leading, by a natural enough extension of the proper subject, to a discussion of the philosophy of expression, and the character of true eloquence. / A scientific analysis of Beauty, such as might belong to a complete doctrine of *Æsthetics*, will not, of course, be expected in a discourse the object of which is rather to assert the rights of love as an intellectual emotion, than to explain the elements of that passion as an object of cognition; but as it would be impossible to give a vindication of the religious feeling in man, without asserting a Divine Being on whom that feeling should be exercised, so every satisfactory philosophy of love must necessarily contain a satisfactory philosophy of the object of love, that is beauty, as a correlative.

The person from whom the *Phædrus* receives its name is a young Athenian, son of Pythocles, of the demos of Myrrhinos, who is represented as fond of literature, and a special admirer of Lysias, and the then rising school of rhetoricians, who formed so remarkable a feature of the intellectual life of Athens, during the fifth century before Christ. In the very graceful and dramatic introduction, Socrates is represented as meeting this young man in a solitary walk near the banks of the Ilissus, without the walls of the city, indulging his literary musings, and ruminating particularly on a discourse which he had just heard from Lysias on the nature of love. Socrates, who always professed to be a special devotee of the celestial Aphrodite, and more than once is represented as saying that he knows nothing in the world but *τὰ ἐρωτικά*, immediately lays hold of the youthful en-

thusiast, and causing him to produce the written discourse of the rhetorician from under his mantle, sits down beneath the broad shadow of a plane-tree, with the clear streamlet purling at his feet; and thus screened from the fierce rays of the mounting sun, listens to the discourse, which very few words from so eager a listener had prevailed on the young student of philosophy to read. The scope of the discourse is to prove that friendship is superior to love. This of course is easily done, by assuming that low type of love which is only a fair disguise of selfishness, as the universal norm of the passion. Socrates expresses, in his usual style of honest sympathy, great admiration of the discourse; but insinuates quietly that it is not without great faults in point even of that rhetorical composition of which Lysias was so expert a master; and, on being pressed by Phædrus, is forced to give weight to his criticism, in a manner to which few modern critics would like to be subjected, by producing a better discourse himself. This discourse, of course, to admit of comparison with that of the orator, must be in the same vein; but no sooner has Socrates finished, and gained a complete triumph in the estimation of the warm admirer of his rival, than he is suddenly seized with a feeling of compunction, that in representing friendship as superior to love, he had been committing a great sin; blaspheming, in fact, the divinity of Eros the son of Aphrodite, whom all worship as a god. He is therefore impelled by the strong prophetic impulse of his soul (*μαντικόν γάρ τι καὶ ἡ ψυχὴ*) to bring forth a palinode of what he had uttered against a Being, who, if not a god, was at least 'something divine,' and to be dealt with reverentially.

This palinode, or discourse, in favour of impassioned affection, as superior to a sober friendly regard, stands, to borrow an architectural illustration, in the same relation to the preceding and following parts of the Phædrus, that the nave of a Gothic church does to the Galilee or porch at the west end, and the chapter-house, or other outlying accessories, attached to the further end of the building.

The defence of love commences with the often-quoted declaration of Plato, that, though madness (*μανία*) generally is a diseased state of mind, and of course not to be preferred to sound-mindedness (*σωφροσύνη*), yet there is an exception to this rule in the case of a certain 'divine madness,' by which, as a well-recognised medium, the greatest gifts are conferred on mortal men by the givers of all good things, *νῦν δὲ τὰ μεγίστα τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἡμῶν γίνονται διὰ μανίας θεῖαί μιν τοῖς δόσει διδομένης*). Familiar illustrations of this divine madness are found in the utterances of prophets and oracles at Delphi, Dodona, and elsewhere; furthermore, in the existence of prophetic powers in certain families, by means of which persons and peoples are purified of guilt, and restored to a happy and blessed life; again, in the well-known 'possession of poets by the Muses, which, mastering an impressible and untrodden soul (*ἀπαλὴν καὶ ἄχατον ψυχὴν*), fills them with a sort of Bacchantic inspiration, which produces dithyrambic odes, and all poetry; a sort of possession so indispensable to a poet, that with all the talent and preparation possible, no person can hope to reach 'the gates of the Muses' without this 'madness.' In this extravagant transport, therefore, there is, by the universal consent of humanity, some-

thing divine, which sobriety shall in vain task itself to achieve ; a truth sufficiently patent to the wise (*σοφοί*), though of course there will always be an order of superficial clever men (*δεινοί*), either virtually destitute, or by evil practices robbed of the faculty of reverence, who deny everything that they cannot square with the rules of a cold, narrow understanding, and who, in fact, believe in nothing, either in heaven above or in earth beneath, superior to themselves.

In order to show more clearly the nature of this divine madness generally, of which love is a species, we must consider, first, the nature of a rational soul. Now soul is that which, being in itself essentially self-motive, is the only source of whatever motion may be exhibited in things that do not move themselves. It is also eternal ; for, as it never could have acquired from without that inherent motive power, which is of its essence, so it never can be deserted by a quality, which is only the expression of its own most real and inalienable nature. Self-motive soul, therefore, has neither beginning nor end. Now self-motive souls are of two kinds, the divine and the human, of which both originally have their home in the heavenly places ; but the latter, after tasting more or less completely of the eternal realities of the divine life, have been thrust down into this lower sphere with various fleshly incumbrances, and in a state of greater or less capacity, through the gross medium of this terrestrial life, to discern and enjoy the imperfect images of the eternal types of perfection which are here presented to their senses. The present terrestrial life carries within itself the sleeping memory, so to speak, of a higher celestial life which has preceded it ; and our whole process of

knowing and feeling on earth may, without any stretch of metaphor, be most aptly compared to a gradually awakened reminiscence of the divine visions of goodness, and truth, and loveliness, which the soul enjoyed when it followed, previous to its fleshly encasement, the gods above in their super-celestial courses.¹ The power or faculty by which the soul takes delight in whatever stirs its essentially divine nature, is allegorised by Plato as the wings of the spirit (τὸ τῆς ψυχῆς πτέρωμα); and the growth of these wings, or in modern language the development of the highest powers of the soul, is promoted by their being provided with their only natural nourishment, viz., the Divine, in its threefold manifestation of the BEAUTIFUL, the WISE, and the GOOD (τὸ δὲ θεῖον καλὸν σοφὸν ἀγαθὸν καὶ πᾶν ὅτι τοιοῦτον). Now love, or the fourth kind of divine madness of which we have spoken, is nothing but the strange ecstasy and unspeakable transport of the soul, when it first awakens to some earthly vision of those bright realities which it beheld along with the gods in the heavenly places; and just in proportion to the quantity and the quality of the vision of the eternal realities, which the soul had obtained in its pre-existent celestial career, will be the duration and the intensity

¹ Let who says

The soul's a clean white paper, rather say
A palimpsest, a prophet's holograph
Defiled, erased, and covered by a monk's,
The Apocalypse by a Longus! poring on
Which obscure text he may discern perhaps
Some fair fine trace of what was written once;
Some off-stroke of an Alpha and Omega
Expressing the old Scripture —.

—MRS BROWNING, *Aurora Leigh*, Book I., p. 30.

of the passion of divine love which it experiences here below. The ultimate object of this passion is not mere bodily beauty ; but justice, and temperance, and truth, every excellence that belongs to a pure and noble soul : but the passion of love is directly excited by the Beautiful alone, for the obvious reason that Beauty only is capable of that sort of bodily apparition which can be perceived through sensuous organs. Justice, and temperance, and truth, though no less divine, cannot rush into the soul through that most perfect sense, the eye, and through this breach, as it were, take the soul by storm. It is therefore ordained that all men, even the wisest, shall be the slaves of corporeal beauty, in the first place, as that kind of celestial virtue which alone admits of a full and sense-overwhelming revelation.¹ On the presentment of a beautiful object to a human soul, the passion of

¹ As a proof of the original connection of beauty with the most perfect of our senses, that of sight, we may instance the Hebrew word *IAPEH*, beautiful, from *IAPAH*, *splenduit* ; see Gesenius ; as also undoubtedly the German *schön*, from *scheinen*. That this word originally signified *bright* and *clear*, is proved from old German writers in Campe's Dictionary. Hence also the definition in Sir CHRISTOPHER WREN's *Parentalia* (London, 1750) : 'Beauty is the harmony of objects, begetting pleasure to the EYE.'—But the high prerogative of visual above all other perceptions, has been well stated by Mr HAY, on another ground, thus : 'The impression of a sound, whether simple or complex, when made upon the ear, is instantaneously conveyed to the mind ; but when the sound ceases, the power of observation also ceases. But the eye can dwell upon objects presented to it ; and the mind has thereby the power of leisurely examining and comparing them ; and the emotion thereby produced being submitted to a mental analysis, partakes of a metaphysico-æsthetic character.'—*Science of Beauty*, p. 17. On the history of the transitions of meaning in the word *Beauty*, compare generally DUGALD STEWART, *Philosophical Essays on the Beautiful*, c. i. and ii.

love is excited; and in the case of human beauty, every soul is excited in the degree and manner of which its nature is capable. Base souls, almost wholly embruted in sense, love, almost as brutes do, with a very slight admixture of intellectual ecstasy; but all noble human souls see in the loved object the more or less complete realisation of that peculiar type of excellence, the lines of which were stamped into their souls during their celestial career in the train of the chariots of the gods in heaven. The effect of this recognition of our ideal in the person of a fellow-being, is to cause an ardent desire for the realisation of every sort of divine excellence to burn in the breast of the lover. His whole life thenceforth, under the influence of this divine passion, has but this one object, to make himself and the object of his love as like to the divine original which he brought with him from heaven, as anything human may be to a thing essentially divine. Love, therefore, is the noblest of all passions, and the most blessed in its effects. It excites and maintains in the souls of those who are its subjects, a constant pleasurable desire to exhibit always, for mutual gratification, the best that they possess, to be always something more than they appear, and, in the continuous contemplation of pure excellence, to feel a felicity which it is beyond the power of human words or human actions to express.

Before completing our brief abstract of this magnificent discourse, let us analyse the kernel of it, as it now lies before us, and see to what it amounts. The substance of it seems to be capable of being reduced to these two propositions:—

PROPOSITION FIRST.—All earthly excellence is

merely an imperfect exhibition or reflection of the higher heavenly excellence from which it is derived; and all human thought and feeling is significant only in so far as it expresses some element of this divine intelligence.

PROPOSITION SECOND.—The Beautiful, the True, and the Good are eternal and necessary elements of the Divine and human nature; say rather eternal and necessary modes whereby the Divine and human natures express their inherent excellence; the BEAUTIFUL being the divinely excellent in form, and colour, and sound, embraced in its concrete exhibition by the enraptured imagination; the TRUE being the foundation of absolute reality, the root of all beautiful existence, as recognised by the cognitive faculty; and the GOOD being the divinely excellent in the form of action, or heroic struggle, to realise, at whatever cost, those divine conceptions, the realisation of which alone gives existence an abiding value and an exalted interest.

Now, though there may not be much here out of which a formal writer on the Fine Arts might multiply his chapters, there is that without which all discussions on the Fine Arts are only graceful trifling, which will never find its way to the heart of a serious man. The first proposition gives to everything human its high consecration, by causing men in their several vocations, whether as poets, painters, or philosophers, to consider themselves as the ministering servants of the supreme and essentially self-existent, most excellent DIVINE ENERGY; it makes all men 'fellow-workers with GOD,' so that each individual, instead of indulging his own lawless whim, and occupying him-

self with ingenious freaks, barren of all organic results, acts as part of a harmoniously ordered scheme, and as a pious contributor to that cunningly ordered and divinely energised whole of things which we call the UNIVERSE. There is in fact no difference, except in the symbolism of expression, between the doctrine of the Phædrus, with regard to the human soul, and that of the first chapter of Genesis, which has passed into the familiar creed of all Christendom. 'And GOD said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.' If so, all fundamentally human ideas, such as our primary conceptions of the Good, the Beautiful, and the True, must be divine ideas, and possess significance only as coming from and tending towards GOD; which is literally the philosophy of Plato. If it be true (as assuredly it cannot be questioned) that the Platonic philosophy is 'not so much a system of doctrines as a mental attitude,'¹ it is equally true that this attitude and that of Christianity are identical. But though this identity is indisputable (and one in fact heartily recognised by all the most intelligent of the Greek fathers), it is an identity only of fundamental principle, not of the method of presentment. Christianity, which was sent into the world, not as a philosophy of all things, but as a special antidote to a moral disease, presents the moral aspect of the Divine nature only; and for this reason some Christians of narrow minds and small capacity have been only too willing to look on

¹ ARCHER BUTLER. So MUNK (*Einleitung*, p. 12): 'The Platonic philosophy is no scientific doctrinal system like that of Aristotle; it is a practice of life resting upon the knowledge of the highest ideas, and which is manifested, not in dogmatic propositions, but in emotion and action.'

the Divine Nature as only and exclusively moral. But Plato, as a large-minded philosopher and a Greek, could find no nourishment to his capacious soul in this one-sided conception of the many-sided unity of the Divine Excellence. With him the BEAUTIFUL is as inherently godlike as the TRUE and the GOOD; and he could not for a moment have admitted the superficial and altogether inadequate notion of those moderns, who, admitting the principles of morality to be eternal and immutable, see in the manifestation of the Beautiful, which is the very living web of manifold creation, only a pleasant play of human associations, utterly divorced from the permanency which belongs to the conception of a divine law. By this frivolous conceit, the province of art has been profaned at the touch of trifling intruders, and the humanly Beautiful robbed of its Divine soul. Other causes, besides the mere narrowness and one-sidedness of the human mind, tended to produce this unhappy result. Popery, with all its faults, had one virtue; it maintained, even within the walls of unlovely and flesh-torturing monachism, that union between the Beautiful and the Holy in the shape of religious art, which the sternness of the merely moral prophet often disallows, but for which the healthy appetite of a fully developed human intellect can never cease to crave. This union Protestantism, in its extreme development, spurned as a thing unholy; and the Beautiful, from being the authentic interpreter of the Divine, became the minister of personal vanity and the instrument of profane decoration. Along with this ungraceful tendency of a meagre and colourless religiosity, came in this country the curiously minute study of dry material pheno-

mena, and cold mechanical laws; the effect of which was, in many cases, so to absorb the mind with the petty details of the merely True, as to make it lose the habit of contemplating with a holy joy and delight the grand combinations of the Beautiful and the Sublime. The rage for the physical sciences among cultivated men in this country, found an ally in the much-vaunted practical habits of the British people, and in the devotion of their whole energies to the enormous multiplication of masses of merely material wealth. A new science was created, called POLITICAL ECONOMY, in which personal excellence was made subsidiary to material accumulation, and national prosperity measured by the production of wares which adorn the body, but leave the soul unimproved. Nor, again, were our schools and universities in any degree concerned to offer, in the shape of formal teaching, a small counteracting power to the barbarising influence of bigots and money-makers. A professorship of the Fine Arts would have appeared a piece of rare foolery, alike to grave Orators in the academic hall, to solemn Divines in the ecclesiastical assembly, and to hard-faced Utilitarians on the exchange. All these causes combined have tended to generate and maintain in this country an unnatural feeling, as if there was nothing less divine in the nature of things than Beauty; but the grand primary instincts of the human soul, like the fountains which flow from the eternal hills, though they may cease in a dry season, will infallibly burst again, when the times of refreshing shall come from the heaven-descending dews; and we have seen not a few signs in the horizon lately, which make us hopeful that the day may not be far distant, when all churches

and schools shall unite in the fervent worship of the indivisible True, Beautiful, and Good, with an energy as undaunted as that which now inspires the deluded worshippers of Mammon.

It remains now that we state shortly the contents of the third and concluding part of the *Phædrus*, and bring forward distinctly one or two important æsthetic principles which it contains.

After Socrates has delivered his encomium of Eros, the dialogue reverts to the discourse of Lysias, and the art of rhetorical expression, and literary composition generally. A vein of thought is soon evolved, which appears in various forms, and with very various accompaniments in Plato. The proposition is laid down, that there can be no true eloquence without truth; and that a person who addresses himself to move an audience, by cunningly working on their prejudices, and lending an air of dignity to paltry opinions, is a juggler or a bungler, but not an artist; for ALL ART IS FOUNDED ON SCIENTIFIC PRINCIPLES, AND IS THE TRUE EXPRESSION OF AN ETERNAL VERITY.¹ Here we have an æsthetic axiom enunciated, of the importance of which, when consistently and comprehensively applied, there can be no doubt. In the most recent times, Mr Carlyle and Mr Ruskin have earned a solid claim to public gratitude by sturdily (if not always discreetly) insisting on this fundamental principle of Platonic criticism. There must always be something seriously and sincerely self-assertive in the artist: otherwise all art is

¹ In the mixture of elements making up the *ἀγαθόν*, with which the *PHILEBUS* winds up, TRUTH is included as the most essential: *ᾧ μὴ μίջωμεν ἀλήθειαν, οὐκ ἂν ποτε τοῦτο ἀληθῶς γίγνοιτο οὐδ' ἂν γινόμενον εἶη.*—64, B.

a delusion and a sham. Another principle of criticism is then brought out, that of *congruity*, *proportion*, and *unity*, which, as it has already been fully insisted on in the previous pages, I will not allude to here, further than to translate the words of the philosopher: 'This, I think, one may certainly say, that every well-composed discourse should have in itself the similitude of a complete animal, so as to be neither headless nor footless, but to have the middle and the extremities so fashioned, as to be in keeping with (πρέποντα) one another, and with the whole.' It is then shown that this congruity can never be achieved without clear ideas of genus and species; without practice in that grand dialectic art, which teaches the exercised thinker to deal with a whole and its parts, as a good carver does with the animal which he cuts up. The vanity of rhetorical terminology is then taught, which, at the best, does but teach the workman to name his tools, and can neither inspire him with energy, nor enrich him with ideas. It is next shown more in detail, by the example of Pericles and others, that the truly wise man alone can be truly eloquent; that in the first place, and as the indispensable condition of all effective utterance, the great speaker must know the human soul, and human souls, and all the various forms of what is most excellent in them. Further, that the object of all noble human speech cannot be to gratify men, but 'to please the gods, as good masters.' Here, again, the essentially religious consecration, which all enduring work in composition and criticism must receive, is brought forward with a prominence peculiarly Platonic. The dialogue then concludes with a very ingenious and elegantly wrought out contrast between

the great central perennial force of eloquence in a noble soul, and the fragmentary and imperfect exhibitions of that force in the shape of essays, speeches, poems, and other products of literary activity. A doubt is raised—and not without reason—whether men have not rather weakened the living efficiency of reasoned expression, by the verbal machinery, written and printed words, which they have invented for its preservation. At all events, with that intense feeling of a central reality which is so characteristic of Plato, the distinction is strongly insisted on between the glowing power of a spoken speech, and the mere grey shadow of it, which can be impressed on paper. *A man worthy to be used as an instructor, must always have a great deal more in his soul than he has said, or can say, in his books;*¹ whereas, when the vain-glorious exhibitor of himself has made his speech, or written his pretty poem, there is nothing more behind, with which a man would wish to cultivate intercourse: the printed word is the best part of the man, or rather, something better. But wherever there is true eloquence and the highest style of composition, the central force, from which these fragmentary manifestations proceed, is always a strong life, and that life is a glorious soul, and that soul is from the everlasting Godhead.

III. THE BANQUET.

'The Banquet,' says SHELLEY, 'is the most beautiful and perfect of all the works of Plato.' This is quite true. But its beauty and perfection do not arise

¹ 'The poet looks beyond the book he has made,
Or else he had not made it.'—MRS BROWNING, *Aurora Leigh*.

from its enunciating with greater weight, comprehensiveness, and clearness, a greater amount of philosophic truth, but from the luxuriant variety of its imaginative expression, and its finely-rounded artistical completeness. Nothing, indeed, can tend more effectually to elevate our conception of the lofty genius of Plato, than first to read this dialogue, where the philosopher vies with Aristophanes in playful luxuriance, and excels him in chastened beauty, and then to make a careful study of such a dialogue as the *Philebus*, where he exhibits all the subtle discernment and fine analytic power of the Stagyrte.

The subject of the *Banquet* is the same as that of the *Phædrus*, viz., the philosophy of love, and the method of treatment, so far as mere artistic plan goes, is very similar; but the contents are as different as could possibly have proceeded from the same author treating the same subject. An account is given of a banquet given by the poet Agathon, on the day after he gained the tragic prize; and as all the guests had indulged pretty freely in the gifts of Bacchus on the preceding day, it is proposed that entertainment for the present evening shall be provided in a more intellectual way, by each guest, in order, pronouncing an encomium on the god Eros, who, though mentioned among the very earliest powers of the Cosmos by the poetic theologer of Bœotia,¹ does not seem to have

¹ Next after CHAOS and TARTARUS, EARTH the primeval mother produces LOVE.

Ἡ δ' Ἔρος ὃς κάλλιστος ἐν ἀθανατοῖσι θεοῖσι
 Λυσιμελής πάντων τε θεῶν, πάντων τ' ἀνθρώπων
 Δάμναται ἐν στήθεσσι νόον καὶ ἐπίφρονα βουλήν.

HESED, *Theog.* 120.

received from the later poets and philosophers that amount of praise to which he is so justly entitled. The proposal is agreed to; and the nature and excellency of the god EROS is descanted on by the different members of the party in succession, with a wonderful variety of tone and imagery; by Phædrus, the same enthusiastic friend of letters who gives his name to the dialogue just analysed; by Pausanias; by Eryximachus, a physician; then by Aristophanes, the comedian; then by Agathon, the tragic poet; then by the chosen expositor of all Plato's highest and most peculiar doctrines, Socrates. Afterwards, when the subject seems exhausted, and the actors in this scene of intellectual conviviality have played their parts, the philosopher, with the true instinct of a poetic artist, winds up the whole by the introduction of a new character, but a character without whom such a scene, at that time and place, could not have been complete. This character is Alcibiades; who, rushing into the midst of the sober company, with all the careless impetuosity of youth, to which spurs are added by the fervid inspiration of the wine-god, pronounces an amusing and characteristic encomium, not on Eros, but on Socrates, a man, who was always talking about Love, but never could be got to practise it like any Greek mortal; being, in fact, in this as in other matters, an oddity—*ἄτοπός τις*—on whose motions no one could calculate. The dialogue then ends, after all the previous professions of sobriety, in a regular drinking bout, from which the guests of sensitive stomach, Phædrus and Eryximachus, at an early period made their escape; but Agathon, and Aristophanes, and Socrates, like stout poets and philosophers, kept talking, and discussing, and drink-

ing out of a large bowl (ἐκ φιάλης μεγάλης), till at length both the tragic poet and the comedian fall asleep, and Socrates, the interminable discourser and unconquerable drinker, rises and goes out to the Lyceum, and washes himself, and betakes himself to the occupations of the new day, as if nothing had taken place.

It would not serve the purpose of the present exposition to give a detailed account of all the different aspects, in which LOVE is presented by the different speakers in this rich and various dialogue. Only one or two of the more prominent points may be noted, and the main drift given of the encomium spoken by Socrates, which certainly contains the views that Plato considered most important. The aspect of the question illustrated by Eryximachus the physician is one of very great significance in the fine arts, and primarily, as the speaker more fully brings out, in the whole system of Nature. Love, he says, is that potent force inherent not in men only, but in animals, plants, and flowers, and universal nature, which leads to a blissful reconciliation, and a higher unity, by the harmonising of contraries.¹ Thus hunger is a longing or erotic power, which acts despotically till the vacuity of the corporeal system, caused by abstinence, is harmonised by the fulness of the food supplied; and this harmonious and well-balanced condition of the two opposite states of vacuity and replenishment is the healthy pleasurable action of the stomach. So, in

¹ This principle appears again stated, not under the emotional influence of EROS, but with cool, intellectual precision, in the *Philebus*, γέννα, ὁπόση παύει πρὸς ἀλλήλα τ' ἀναντία διαφόρως ἔχοντα.—25 E. See below.

music, high and low notes at the opposite end of a scale are capable of being sounded together; and in the case of musically-constituted living organisms, we find that they are actually impelled by the power of love to seek after that harmonious blending of contraries which we call Concord (*ἡ γὰρ ἁρμονία, συμφωνία τις ἐστὶ, συμφωνία δὲ ὁμολογία τις*). In the seasons of the year the same mysterious influence of a divine Force gratefully compelling contraries to a higher unity is manifest. The hot and the cold principle, the moist and the dry, though essentially opposite, do nevertheless, when mingled by love, 'receive a wise harmony and tempering' (*ἁρμονίαν καὶ κρᾶσιν σώφρονα*), which alone brings the fruits of the earth to ripeness, and the body of man to the feeling of full healthy enjoyment. In the same way, love is the necessary craving of the solitary and widowed soul to be satisfied with the fullness of beauty, from fellowship with a nature at once kindred and opposite. The universality of this principle shows clearly enough that Eros is in very deed one of the most ancient of the gods, whose presence was absolutely necessary, before the chaos of the first crude creative energy could be modulated into a cosmos; and the man who has once fully recognised the perpetual operation of this divinely-harmonising power in every vital function and in every natural operation, will not be slow to acknowledge its reflex action in the imitative processes of poetry and the fine arts.

So far the physician. Socrates, who professes to have received his knowledge of the nature of love from Diotima, a wise prophetess of Mantinea, expounds his views as follows:—LOVE, he says, is not a god of the highest order, but an inferior deity (not θεὸς but

δαίμων, according to a distinction unknown, indeed, to Homer, but seemingly nothing strange in Plato's days¹). This is manifest, from the want of something beyond himself, which is so characteristic of Eros, but which, as involving dependence, cannot be supposed to belong to the self-sufficing Divine nature. Now what all men love and long for is most generally expressed by τὸ ἀγαθόν, the GOOD: and love consists in being possessed by the strong desire that we may possess what is good, and that for ever. But there is no method by which mortal creatures may possess what is good for ever, and thus in a manner partake of immortality, except by generation. Love, therefore, necessarily implies generation; and all men, whether as the parents of children in the flesh, or as the creators of social organisation, the founders of philosophical schools, or the makers of poems, paintings, and statues, are in fact acting under the imperative impulse of divine love, urging them always, by generation, to immortalise, so far as may be, the best part of themselves, by transference to that which bears the impress and image of themselves. Now this generation, whether in the case of mental or bodily pro-

¹ It is recognised as early as HESIOD (*Works and Days*, v. 122), if the passage be not an interpolation. Assuming, however, the authenticity of the passage (to which no MS. suspicion is attached), there seems to me little doubt that Götting is right, when he attributes to the whole doctrine of intermediate superhuman powers an Oriental origin. Hesiod, as a theologer, would naturally set forth a system of divine things, which he would receive in its most complete form from the great masters of all profounder religious philosophy, the wise men of the East. From Götting's note, it appears that Thales, according to Athenagoras, taught the same doctrine.

ducts, takes place only in the Beautiful; *τίλπειν γὰρ ἐν μὲν αἰσχρῷ οὐ δύναται, ἐν δὲ τῷ καλῷ*. Why this can take place only in the Beautiful,—that is to say, in other words, why men, whether as philosophers, statesmen, or poets, seek to create beautiful rather than ugly things, and why men fall in love with women, even the plainest, for some real beauty actually discerned in them, rather than from some ugliness—is by no means, according to the shallow doctrine of the Edinburgh sophists, a matter of mere association; but the eternal reason of the thing lies, where alone it can lie, in the excellency of the divine nature of which Eros partakes; for all generation is a divine act, *θεῶν πρᾶγμα*, the immortal, in fact, immanent in the mortal (*ἐν θνήτῳ ὄντι τῷ ζῳῳ ἄθανατον ἔνεστιν*): ‘and all ugliness possesses an essential incongruity with what is divine, but the beautiful is congruous with everything god-like.’ Beauty, therefore, may be justly looked on as at once ‘the Fate which presides over generation, and the Eileithuia, or goddess of delivery, who presides over birth.’¹ For which reason, ‘when that which teems with generative power approaches that which is beautiful, it becomes benign and blithe, and diffuses itself with a liberal joy, and generates and causes conception; but when it encounters what is ugly, it contracts itself, and rolls back with a revulsion and retires, and will not generate; and being forced to restrain the generative impulse, is affected with a feeling of discomfort.’ It is plain, therefore, according to this account, that they do not define love fully, who say that the proper object of Eros is beauty simply; but we speak with scientific precision only when we say the object of love is generation and

¹ Μοῖρα οὖν καὶ Εἰλειθυία ἡ καλλονὴ ἐστὶ τῇ γενέσει.—206, D.

offspring in the Beautiful. Now this divine passion of producing offspring, manifests itself in every possible variety of ways; and there are many grades of nobility in the passion, according as it possesses more or less of the Divine. The lowest stage, of course, is the mere love of beautiful bodies, which enables beautiful parents constantly to delight themselves in the contemplation of that immortality, which shall never cease in a constantly-repeated beautiful offspring, generation after generation. Then we have that superior class of persons, whose main productive energy is in their minds, and whose passion can be gratified only by a union with intellectual insight and all virtue (*φρόνησιν τε καὶ ἄλλην ἀρετήν*). Among these are poets, and such among artists—architects, for instance—as exhibit inventive power; but much higher than these are the persons whose main delight is in justice and a well-tempered moral nature (*σωφροσύνη*), and who are thereby peculiarly fitted for creating social harmony and governing states. Men of this class are highly susceptible of the passion of love in its highest potency; for they desire to exercise their benevolent genius on every individual possessed of attractive qualities whom they may encounter, and, by wise and loving intercourse with him, prepare themselves for the great work of ruling and improving the masses of men. Last, and most perfect of all, come those truly philosophic souls, who, by well-measured ascent, have, step by step, arrived at the knowledge, not of individual beautifuls, whether in bodies, or in books, or in social life, but in that which is essentially and everlastingly beautiful—the *ἀεὶ ὄν καὶ οὔτε γιγνόμενον οὔτε ἀπολλύμενον, οὔτε αὐξάνομενον, οὔτε φθίνον*—the one inexhaustible fountain of all Beauty in

this world, and in all possible worlds—the very Divine essence itself, in which Beauty inheres, pure, unadulterated, and incorruptible for evermore.

Such is a compendious statement of the most important matter, touching the doctrine of love and beauty, which this very beautiful and eminently characteristic dialogue contains. The reader who is capable of receiving Platonic ideas, will perceive at once, that it presents only in another form the great doctrine of the Phædrus, that **ALL BEAUTY IS ESSENTIALLY DIVINE**: and that the beautiful, the true, and the good, are only different phases of the manifestation of one eternal Divine Perfection. That the dialogue thus contains, in various shapes, the fundamental postulate of every possible theory of Beauty, no man who has any vocation to speak on these subjects will deny; for though the rapt vision of the abstract *αὐτὸ τὸ καλὸν* may be a something, which it is more easy for finite concrete creatures to talk sublimely about, than intelligibly to grasp, or profitably to use, there can, on the other hand, be no end to the beneficent issues of the grand principle here enunciated by Socrates, when once received with a fertilising virtue into the soul; **BEAUTY IS AT ONCE THE LEGITIMATE FATE THAT CONTROLS ALL GENERATION, AND THE BENEVOLENT GODDESS WHO PRESIDES AT EVERY BIRTH.**

IV. THE PHILEBUS.

In passing from the Banquet and the Phædrus to the Philebus of Plato, we feel as a man might do, who, after having travelled some two or three thousand

miles asleep in a railway carriage, suddenly emerges into a new country and an opposite climate. Not more different is a blooming garden, rich with all the odorous essences of a swelling vegetation, from an elegant stone palace, with curiously coloured windows and nicely tessellated floors, than is the Symposium of Plato from the Philebus. This contrast indicates the wealth of the writer's mind, as we see in Goethe, Shakespeare, and a few others. Nevertheless this difference is, after all, only a matter of style and exhibition; the substance is the same. Every great mind is always necessarily true to itself, and to those innate organising ideas which enable it, by an absolute indefeasible natural right, to assume the lordship of the accidental. So Plato, in the Philebus, only subjects to a detailed analysis of the critical understanding all those grand principles of divine Beauty, which he had shaped out, under the generative impulse of plastic emotion in the Phædrus. From the dialogue we are now going to examine, the strictly scientific inquirer will receive greater satisfaction; but from the two previous ones, the sympathetic ardour of a Platonic student of the best class will receive more nutriment.

The question discussed in the Philebus, though called 'moral' in the old titles, might as well be called intellectual and æsthetical; for, raising, as it does, the comparison of *φρόνησις* and *ἡδονή*—of *intellectual insight* or *discernment*, and *pleasure*—in their relation to the absolute Good, τὸ ἀγαθόν, it involves an inquiry into the nature and character of intellectual ideas on the one hand, and of pleasurable emotion on the other. Now both of these contrasted subjects,

when fully discussed, involve æsthetical considerations of the highest consequence. Pleasurable emotion, as we have seen, from the elementary notions started in the Hippias, is an essential element of all æsthetic action; and, on the other hand, that the fundamental principles of the fine arts, in the system of Plato, fall under the domain of strictly scientific intellect, no person who has caught any tincture of his philosophy will for a moment doubt. In this dialogue, therefore, if anywhere in Plato, we may expect to find the great lines of a theory of beauty, the grand fundamental substruction, at least, on which a palace of the critical art might be raised; and that these substructions actually do stand out in this work with unmistakeable decision, we shall now show.

The dialogue commences with a short preliminary encounter of wits between Protarchus, the advocate of pleasure, and Socrates, the champion of *φρόνησις*, which leads to the admission, on the part of the former, that pleasure, whatever its nature be, is a very Protean affair, concerning which nothing can be safely predicated in general terms, since one pleasure, in fact, may be as different from another as black is from white, though these are both denominated colours. This prelude being over, the serious business of the argument is introduced by an exposition of the true practical application of the famous paradoxical maxim of the philosophers concerning unity and multiplicity. This maxim, that ONE IS MANY, AND MANY IS ONE—*ἐν γὰρ δὴ τὰ πολλὰ εἶναι καὶ τὸ ἐν πολλὰ*—if taken in a literal sense, is obviously nonsense; for, if any man says that THREE IS ONE, AND ONE IS THREE, he must either be talking nonsense, or have a meaning in his

head quite different from mine, when I say that *three oranges are one orange, and one orange is three*. In what intelligible sense, then, is it said that ONE IS MANY, AND MANY IS ONE, and what scientific use can be made of the paradox? Plainly only by understanding it of the facts of genus, species, and individual existence, on which the doctrine of classification in natural history, and the very possibility of science, depends. The method of all scientific investigation is, in fact, this; and all arts founded on intelligible principles have come into existence only by a living discernment of the manner in which the ONE of the Supreme Idea, in any genus of natural existences, comprehends the MANY of the complex phenomena presented by individuals. ‘Πάντα γὰρ ὅσα τέχνης ἐχόμενα ἀνευρέθη πῶποτε διὰ ταύτης φανερά γέγονε.’ In things that are capable of being known, there are two elements: the element of the material, which is UNLIMITED, ἄπειρον; and the element of form, which impresses a LIMIT, πέρας. Take, for instance, articulate voice. Like the waves of the sea, the mass of voiceful utterance at any moment in the world, is a thing altogether incalculable; it is a confused multitude, and an ἄπειρον, of which nothing can be made. But this boundless volume of enunciated sound proceeds from human mouths, which, however MANY arithmetically, are in character and capacity ONE; for all individual voices are subsumed under the general idea of voice, and what this idea is becomes comprehensible when the cognitive intellect applies itself to the composite phenomena of voices, and by a careful and subtle analysis, ascertains into how many specifically different kinds of sound they can be

resolved. Thus, by starting from the unity of the highest genus, and examining the individuals which compose the many of individual existence, those inferior generic and specific divisions, capable of exact scientific fixation, are brought out and classified, which constitute the sciences of GRAMMAR and MUSIC. Now the ultimate element on which this capability of exact scientific fixation depends, is NUMBER. The human voice is capable of uttering only a certain definite number of those simple emissions of breath called vowels, and those modified motions of breath called consonants; these again admit of being arranged into certain groups of letters, according to the organs by which the breath is modified when passing from the windpipe to the open air; the number of these groups is knowable; and the man who knows the exact number, and only he, is a scientific grammarian. The existence of music, as an art consisting in nicely appreciable acoustic principles, depends on the presence of the same element of arithmetical limitation. There is a definite number of intervals, or calculated distances, between each note of a musical scale; and every separate scale has its own fixed number of limited and appreciable intervals. On this the character of the different scales (*ᾠμῳδίας*) depends; just as, in poetry, the one and many in the sequence of intelligible sounds are subjected to a limit, and made appreciable to intellect by Rhythm and Metres. It appears plainly, therefore, that eloquence, and music, and poetry, become possible by the subjection of an illimitable mass of sounding material to the limiting influence of a plastic form in the shape of NUMBER or PROPORTION.

This fundamental principle, with regard to the significance of number in all arts founded on scientific principles, being satisfactorily settled, the dialogue proceeds to investigate the application of this principle to the doctrine of PLEASURE, and the discovery of the *τὸ ἀγαθόν*. And, in the first place here, it is evident that no satisfactory estimate of Pleasure can be formed except by a logical process, which shall be exhaustive of the exact number of characteristically different genera and species which are comprehended under the vagueness of the general term. The general term, *φρόνησις*, or intellectual discernment, must be treated in the same way; and only thus can a comparison be made between them, in such a manner as to determine which of the two either is absolutely 'the GOOD,' or possesses a greater affinity with the elements of what we call GOOD. But before entering into the curious analysis of both elements, in which the value of the *Philebus* as a metaphysical treatise consists, the concession is made by both parties in the outset, that no sensible man would choose a life of mere pleasure without intellect, or of pure intellect without pleasure, if it were put in his power to receive an existence composed of a mixture of both elements. For to exclude the element of pleasurable excitement altogether from our estimate of the Good, looks more like the crotchet of a philosophising pedant than the decision of an unsophisticated intellect; while, again, a life of mere pleasurable excitement would reduce a man to the state of a sea-blubber, or other soft-bodied animal,¹

¹ Ζῆν δ' οὐκ ἀνθρώπου βίον ἀλλὰ τινος πλεύμονος ἢ τῶν ὕα θαλάσσια μετ' ὁστρέϊνων ἔμψυχά ἐστι σαμμάτων.—21, C.

which lives merely in the present moment, and, being destitute of *φρόνησις*, is deprived also of the pleasures of memory and hope, which enter so largely into the sum total of human enjoyment. Not, therefore, in any one simple element, but in a something mixed or composite, is the good of which we are in search to be found; and, before proceeding further, we must set before us distinctly the nature of combination, and learn to resolve all composite existence into its necessary constituents.

Now it has been already stated that in all things that are, we discern two elements:—

FIRST, The element of the unlimited, multitudinous, and incalculable.

SECOND, The element which limits and defines, which organises and makes measure possible.

But these two imply two others:—

THIRD, The product of the two, the result or thing procreated.

FOURTH, The cause, or fundamental ground, of all elements and all elementary products, viz., GOD.

It is not necessary for our present purpose to follow in detail the illustrations given in the dialogue of the various kinds of composite existence. But there is one passage which brings out so distinctly the function of the Pythagorean principle of NUMBER in making Beauty possible, that, though we have already stated that point with sufficient clearness, it seems advisable in this place to give the very words of the philosopher in a translation¹:—

¹ The passage is 25 E to 26 C, with a clause from 25 B taken in. It will be observed that I do not translate literally, after the fashion of most of Bohn's translators, whose system of minute verbal

“SOCRATES—What I now allude to is the whole genus, under which are comprehended the notions of equality, duplicity, and other such relations of number and measure, and to which belongs the virtue of causing discordant things to cease from their antipathy, by *insinuating the element of number, and thereby producing symmetry and harmony.*

PROTARCHUS—I comprehend ; and by the mingling of this element with the unlimited, I understand you to say that certain products are generated.

SOCRATES—Just so.

PROTARCHUS—Well ; give us an example.

SOCRATES—Is it not plain, in the case of the human body, for instance, that when the irregular and incalculable element has caused disease, a just share of the element of the measurable being introduced, produces health ?

PROTARCHUS—Unquestionably.

SOCRATES—Is it not equally plain, that in the case of high and low, swift and slow in sounds, which are in their nature illimitable, this identical principle being introduced, creates a limit, of which the science of music exhibits the accomplished result ?

PROTARCHUS—Certainly.

SOCRATES—While in the seasons of the year, no less plainly, the presence of the same element, taking away the unlimited excess of heat and cold, produces a state of the atmosphere analogous to what we call symmetrical

accuracy, whether proceeding from pedantic affectation or tasteless stupidity, has done more harm to the just appreciation of the beauties of classical writers among the general public, than the most unlicensed vagueness which so often characterised the handiwork of English translators.

and harmonious in the case of sights and sounds (τὸ δὲ ἴμμετρον καὶ ἅμα σύμμετρον¹).

PROTARCHUS—Exactly so.

SOCRATES—And is not, in fact, everything that we call beauty, and bloom, and ripeness,² caused by the due adjustment of the limiting element, and the unlimited?

PROTARCHUS—Of course.

SOCRATES—And the same thing takes place also in a thousand other cases, which I need not mention. For not only beauty, and health, and strength, in our bodies are the result of this harmonious action, but every highest excellence, of which our souls are capable, proceeds from the same principle. For the celestial Aphrodite herself, the goddess of all beauty, being well aware that mere pleasure, and all sorts of sensuous gratification, have no element of limit inherent in themselves, introduced LAW and ORDER, to which limitation necessarily belongs; and, by doing so, though the advocates of pleasure may assert that she has diminished the amount of human enjoyment, I

¹ It seems to me hopeless to attempt an exact translation of these words. 'Symmetrical' is no more a translation of σύμμετρον, than *Beautiful* is of καλός. The English word gives only a part of the more comprehensive Greek term in both cases. My rendering proceeds from an endeavour to produce, in the best way possible, the same impression on the mind of the English reader, that Plato wished to produce on the Greeks.

² I think it quite plain that ἄραι here does not refer to 'the seasons,' which are disposed of in the previous statement of Socrates, but to the individual instances of ἄραι, ripeness, bloom, and beauty, which are the products of seasonal growth. It is quite consistent with a well-known idiom of the Greek language to use such words in the plural.

say rather, with assured confidence, that she has saved pleasure from working its own destruction."

The extent and beneficent sway of the element of Limit being thus fully stated, it requires no remarkable sagacity to perceive that the proposed investigation is finished, almost before it is begun. For if health, and beauty, and strength, and the benign order of the seasons, are the effect of limitation; and if limitation be a thing which of all others the votaries of pleasure are least willing to admit; if, on the other hand, also, it is equally plain that *φρόνησις*, or intellectual discernment, is a faculty which manifests itself by imposing a limit and creating a proportion; the conclusion seems inevitable that *φρόνησις*, as the productive principle of the best things in the world, must itself be one of the best things, and, if not the *τὸ ἀγαθόν*, certainly much more akin to it than any kind of *ἡδονή*. This conclusion presses on the thinker more urgently, when he follows out this excellent element to its ultimate and fundamental cause, *viz.*, *νοῦς*, *ψυχή*, MIND and SOUL, and the Supreme GOD, which are identical. 'For all wise men agree,' says the philosopher, howsoever a few clever talkers may conceit themselves, that 'MIND IS THE KING OF HEAVEN AND EARTH' (28 C); and that of all things excellent and admirable in the little world of man, something of the same kind, but infinitely more excellent and more admirable, is the cause, in the great world of which man is a part. An extract from this passage also¹ we will translate, as being so characteristic of Plato, whose philosophy is kept together by his theology, as an arch is by its key-stone. How different from the

¹ 30 A.

frigid perverseness of certain modern philosophasters, who, in this magnificently furnished palace of the universe, are eager to pay homage to every body and every thing but its Supreme Master and Architect!

"SOCRATES—For indeed, O Protarchus, it is impossible to conceive that these four things of which we have been talking, the limit and the illimitable, the composite product of both, and the cause of the whole, which as a necessary fourth element is always inherent in the other three, and may be taken as the representative of the whole,—that this fourth element, I say, as the ultimate root from which all the rest spring, should furnish man with a soul, should, by means of gymnastic training, develop his body into beauty, should invent medicine to heal its diseases, and in other cases supply other remedies to all sorts of evils as they arise, and should, for these admirable displays of efficacious excellence, be styled wisdom in a thousand diverse phases; while the same three elements, with their ultimate ground, appearing on an infinitely larger scale in the Universe and in the Heavens, and also, as is natural to expect, more free from fault and blemish, should not have produced a scheme of things full of all that is most lovely and most to be admired.¹

"PROTARCHUS—I could by no means admit such an absurdity.

¹ There are difficulties in the original of this passage, but not at all such as to warrant Burges' assertion, that 'the words are evidently defective, and that the syntax must continue to baffle all the exertions of scholars.' Nothing is more natural, in fact, than the substitution in the mind of the writer of *τὸ πρῶτον τέταρτον* for the total four, of which it is the potential reality; and herein, as BADHAM, with his usual sound sense, observes, the key of the whole

"SOCRATES—If, then, the idea of a universe without order and beauty, a mere random system of chance influences and energies, is to be rejected,¹ we shall certainly be nearer the truth when we say, that there is in the immense whole of which our little human world is a part, a great mass of the unlimited element, and no small amount of the limiting element, and that composite products from these two likewise exist in large quantity, as also a fundamental causative substratum of all, correspondent to the magnitude of the effects;² which ultimate cause, as the producer of months and seasons and years, and of the whole beautiful disposition of nature, will justly be called WISDOM and MIND.

"PROTARCHUS—Most justly.

"SOCRATES—But Wisdom and Mind are inconceivable without Soul.

"PROTARCHUS—Quite inconceivable.

"SOCRATES—We shall say, therefore, that the essence of the nature of Jove, as supreme deity, is

passage lies. Nothing could be more unhappy than the expulsion of the *σωμαστία*, which Burges and others suggest, as it is evidently placed here to introduce the *λατρίκη*, which would be imperfect without the previous mention of the virtue of the *αἰτία* in producing the nobler phenomenon of a healthy and well-trained body.

¹ I take in this from 28 D to 29 A.

² In this passage I have supplied the third element, *καὶ κοινόν*, from 30 B, as Winkelman proposed; but I do not agree with Burges that *κοινόν* is unintelligible, or that it should be expelled from the text. Badham has no note on this subject; but to my mind the probability is far greater, that the words *καὶ κοινόν* should have been omitted by the transcriber from their similarity to *κοινόν*, than that Plato should have omitted one of his four elements in a passage where an exact correspondence is necessarily intended.

imperial¹ Soul, and that in him resides necessarily imperial Mind, by the virtue of the cause; while in other deities other excellent qualities reside, and the virtue which is most dear to each. And this result to which we have arrived is not fruitless; for it furnishes from dialectical inquiry a sensible aid to those wise men who, in the old times, affirmed that MIND ALWAYS GOVERNS ALL THINGS."

From these extracts, and the previous course of the argument, it will be seen that Plato has here arrived analytically at the same results which, in the *Phædrus* and the *Banquet*, are brought out by a concrete appeal to the highly stimulated imagination. THE PRODUCTION OF THE BEAUTIFUL BY THE HARMONISING RECONCILIATION OF CONTRARIES, ascribed in the *Banquet* to EROS (p. 213, above), is here, from the intellectual point of view, with greater dignity attributed to Jove as the supreme intellect; the whole truth being, of course, in Christian phraseology, that GOD IS BOTH TRUTH AND LOVE, and must of course be the one ultimate and indwelling cause of all that excites discerning contemplation and reverential emotion in the universe.

It is not necessary that we should pursue in detail the subtle and curious analysis, first, of the various kinds of pleasure, and then of the various kinds of *φρόνησις*, in a graduated classification of which the present dialogue ends. The greater number of these, from the predominance of the moral element in Plato's mind, are either not of an æsthetical character, or are

¹ βασιλική. The reader of taste and scholarship will at once see why I translate *imperial* in this place, and not *kingly*.

not followed out in their æsthetical bearings. But there is one section, on certain pure pleasures of the simplest and most elementary kind, which contains statements that must be incorporated into every true doctrine of the Beautiful. Of this, therefore, also a translation shall now be given.

“SOCRATES—Those pleasures which are necessarily either preceded or followed by a certain amount of pain, and are therefore properly called mixed pleasures, having been thus brought under review, the course of the investigation, I presume, now leads us to inquire if there be any such thing as pleasures altogether free from any admixture of pain.

“PROTARCHUS—Exactly so. But to what real pleasures, altogether free from the painful and the fantastic, do you allude?¹

“SOCRATES—I allude to those which are produced by beautiful colours, and forms, and most odours, and the pleasures arising from sound, and, in fact, to every case in which the soul is stirred by a pleasurable sensuous affection, without any admixture of pain, and without having been preceded by any uncomfortable sensation of want, as in the case of hunger and thirst.

“PROTARCHUS—Be so good as explain yourself a little more distinctly.

“SOCRATES—I will. When I talk of the beauty of forms, I do not understand, as most people might, certain shapes of living animals or of painted animals, but my argument refers to lines straight or curved gener-

¹ I have curtailed the original here a little; as indeed there is no dialogue of Plato which in some places is so apt to weary, by a minute and over-curious repetition, as does the *Philebus*. The passage begins at 51 A.

ally, and to whatever figures, plain or solid, are made with a straight or a curved outline by rules and plumb-lines, or by compasses and the turner's lathe—things quite familiar to you. Now, with regard to all these things, I say that they are beautiful, not relatively (*οὐκ εἶναι πρὸς τι καλὰ*), as so many other things are, but that by their very nature they are essentially and eternally beautiful (*ἀεί καλὰ καὶ αὐτὰ πεφυκέναι*), and that they are accompanied by certain peculiar pleasures, which have no affinity whatsoever with the pleasurable affection produced by common irritants and stimulants. And of colours also, and the pleasures connected with them, the same thing may be predicated. Do you understand?

“PROTARCHUS—I am doing my best to follow you. Proceed with your illustrations.

“SOCRATES—I may next mention sounds, as notes in music, perfectly smooth and clear, which make one pure sonorous impression on the ear; these also, I say, are beautiful in themselves, and not relatively to any other thing, and they have an inherent quality of producing certain pure pleasures (*καὶ τούτων ξυμφύτους ἡδονὰς ἐπομένους*).

“PROTARCHUS—These instances are not to be disputed.

“SOCRATES—The phenomena connected with smell seem referable to a less divine genus of pleasures; but in respect that wheresoever and in whatsoever subject these phenomena appear, they are not necessarily preceded by any painful sensation, they naturally fall to be classified with the pure pleasures, or at least are altogether of an opposite nature to the mixed pleasures which we formerly discussed. Certainly

sight and hearing supply us with two groups of pleasures of the purest description.

“PROTARCHUS—Of this I have no doubt.”

The phenomena to which attention is invited in this section are of great æsthetical significance, and form the true starting-point for all who will not allow themselves to be seduced from their natural allegiance to the primary and authoritative instincts of Nature, by cunningly-devised theories of a capricious association. Light is pleasant to the eye, absolutely and without relation to any man's associations, simply because light is light, and the eye is the eye, and both are divine. Were what we call vision not the necessary product of one eternal divine energy, acting from two opposite poles, the cognitive and the cognoscible, it is difficult to see how the subject could by any means lay hold of the object, or the object work its way into a perceptive relation with the subject. But this relation being established—being, in fact, the one great fact of intelligent existence, so far as we know it—to say that the primary pleasures of vision and perception depend upon association, is as idle as to say that the pleasure of existence depends upon association. All primary facts stand upon their own basis; not to admit them is to deny a man's own existence, and to stultify the reasoner in the very act of reasoning. The primary pleasures of existence require no explanation and no apology, any more than the primary postulates of thought.

We have thus arrived at a satisfactory and exhaustive philosophy of the two great sources of æsthetic enjoyment, the senses of seeing and hearing. In the first part of the dialogue, the intellectual foundation

of this pleasure was shown to consist in those necessary relations of number and proportion, of which the Divine Mind is the immanent cause; and now the simple pleasurable emotion in itself is also vindicated, as a thing simply and absolutely divine and worthy of all acceptance. He who will insist on going beyond this is a madman, that would go beyond himself and beyond GOD, a poor sceptic, without light and without rudder, fit only to be tossed about in the obscure limbo of Unreason for ever.

With regard to the beauty of straight lines and curved lines, and the figures formed from such, Socrates does not explain himself so accurately as one might wish; but as he is talking only of the pleasure derived from the contemplation of form generally, as a primary fact in our emotional nature, and not at all attempting an explanation of the source of the particular pleasure given by any particular kind of form, there is no reason why we should attempt to trace the operation of an admitted principle into all its details. That the mind must delight in the perception of forms is evident from the fact, that whatsoever we know, we know primarily, and most comprehensively, only by forms as they are revealed through the visual sense; and if accurate knowledge be in the most important cases only a more accurate perception of form, it is clear that, to a creature essentially cognitive, the perception of forms must be a primary source of pleasure; and the more perfect any form is according to its kind, the greater necessarily will be the pleasure which the perception of it affords. Thus a straight line will be admired the more, the more straight it is; and a spherical form, the more completely it ap-

proaches to the equalised roundness of a sphere. And this leads me, in conclusion, to take notice of the last remark in the *Philebus*, which appears of any æsthetic importance. In order to test thoroughly the value of the different kinds of pleasure, Socrates proceeds to ask his very docile auditor, whether, if he wished to estimate the element of whiteness, he would measure it by quantity or by quality. Protarchus of course answers, by quality; and that a small quantity of the purest and clearest white would be of more value towards ascertaining the real place of white in a scale of coloration, than a large quantity of weak and impure white. From this may be deduced an important principle of æsthetic criticism, stated in the text (p. 90), and insisted on particularly by Mr Patterson, in his excellent article on *Real and Ideal Beauty*.¹ The most beautiful object, be it living woman or life-like marble, be it simple colour or complex painting, is always the thing which is most perfect in its kind; that is to say, in other words, most pure from the admixture of any foreign element that would dull the vivid impression made by the thing in its complete purity. The application of this extremely simple principle to the productions of poetry and the fine arts, would open a field of illustration which a big book would not contain. For it is evident that the same imperative law of reality, which demands that every white shall be as much as possible a pure white, and every yellow a pure yellow, may insist, with an equally divine sanction, that everything in the whole region of art shall be simply and entirely purely and

¹ *Blackwood's Magazine*, December 1853.

without contamination, the thing which it pretends to be, and nothing else; a condition that cuts much deeper into the practice of making books and pictures than people may be apt to imagine, till, with a thoroughly honest purpose and a severe self-scrutiny, they sit down to make the experiment.

The concluding part of this subtle dialogue—the analysis of intellectual discernment, and the final comparison drawn between the groups into which it falls, and those which have been already ascertained of pleasure—does not belong to the present inquiry. Enough has been said, I hope, to show that if the ingenious author of the much-bespoken article, *BEAUTY*, so often referred to, had made a serious study of the *Philebus* before assuming the pen, he would have worked out a philosophy of taste from very different principles and with an altogether opposite result. But his having failed to do this, is only one of many evils which Scotland has suffered from her long-continued neglect of the higher academical education, the consequent disregard of Greek, and the practical disownment of *PLATO*.¹

¹ I do not say, of course, that there are no persons in Scotland who read Plato,—though I am afraid, from various causes, they have ever been very few,—but I say that the knowledge we have, in this quarter of the world, at any time possessed of Plato was fragmentary and adventitious, and never became part of our blood and bone. For, as Aristotle says, it is easy to know in a certain fashion, and easier to talk so as to seem to know; but living efficacious knowledge is an affair of growth, and, like all vital operations, requires time. *Τὸ δὲ λέγειν τοὺς λόγους τοὺς ἀπὸ τῆς ἐπιστήμης οὐδὲν σημεῖον—καὶ γὰρ οἱ πρῶτον μαθόντες συνείρουσι μὲν τοὺς λόγους, ἴσασι δ' οὐκ ἔτι γὰρ συμφῦναι, τούτῳ δὲ χρόνου δεῖ.*—*Ethic. Nicom. vii. 3.*

V. THE TIMÆUS.

This dialogue, after the Republic, is perhaps the most characteristic and valuable production of its author. For as, in the great political work, his mind, which in all things delighted to achieve architectural completeness by means of harmony, projected a scheme of social order, according to the type of a perfectly well-organised and harmonious association of human beings for a common purpose, under the presidency of wisdom ; so here, in the Timæus, he exhibits the structure of the Universe, considered as one ordered whole, the product of an all-perfect, all-embracing, and all-harmonising self-existent Intellect. The difference between the two compositions lies principally in this : that whereas, in the former, the philosopher having to do only with human affairs, disposes of many things not free from difficulty with the severe dogmatism of a highly-cultivated and essentially self-reliant intellect, and thus comes into grave collision with actualities of a kind to which the strongest human reason must bend ; here, on the contrary, having to do with divine things, and an infinite complexity of phenomena, towards which human life stands in a very loose and casual relationship ; living also, as he did, in an age when physical science had neither clearly proposed ascertainable objects, nor possessed itself of tools necessary for doing the commonest work with success ; under these circumstances he projects his system of the Universe, with the modesty of a man who knows he is theorising about the whole of a wide country, whose skirts only have been surveyed, and

who is contented to divine where he cannot ascertain. Like a true worker, however, he is diligent to use all the materials which can be found; so that the *Timæus* really becomes a sort of treasure-house of all the physical philosophy of the ancients. The many curious physical and physiological facts and opinions mentioned in this treatise, belong less to Plato than to the time and place when he lived; but what does belong to him, is the manner in which he uses them, and the type which his lofty intellect impresses upon them. It is this type which gives to this physical dialogue a true æsthetical value; for to Plato the world is essentially a BEAUTIFUL world—*εἰκὼν τοῦ νοητοῦ αἰσθητὸς, μέγιστος καὶ ἄριστος κάλλιστος τε καὶ τελειώτατος*,—a bright sensuous image of the intelligential greatest and best, most beautiful and most perfect. It is natural enough, therefore, that some passages should occur in this dialogue, which require specially to be alluded to in a treatise professing to give an account of the Platonic doctrine of the Beautiful. In particular, there is a statement made with regard to the comparative beauty of certain mathematical areas, of which such marked use has been made by modern speculators, that no æsthetical discourse in which this matter is not explained can be regarded as possessing the outline of completeness. I will therefore proceed, first, to give a short account of the general æsthetical foundation of the Universe, as it is enunciated in the *Timæus*; and then conclude with an analysis of the famous passage concerning the comparative beauty of certain angular figures.

The Supreme God, essentially good and excellent in His nature, and being altogether free from *φθόνος*, or

any feeling of ill-will and selfish jealousy, when He created the world, desiring that all things should be good, and nothing bad, as far as might be, κατὰ δύναμιν,¹ perceiving that the visible mass of material things was moving in a disturbed and disorderly fashion, '*brought it from a state of disorder into a state of ORDER, thinking this in every respect better than that.*' Then, that the Universe might not be without the best element, which is always MIND and SOUL, by insinuating mind into the framework of things, He made it a live, intelligent animal, and an animal also the most perfect that can be conceived, so as to embrace within itself every other animal; for '*that which is beautiful can have no likeness to anything which is imperfect*' (ἀτελεῖ γὰρ εἰκὼς οὐδὲν ποτ' ἂν γένοιτο καλόν). We then come to a passage about the four constituent elements of the Universe, EARTH, FIRE, AIR, and WATER, which has caused much trouble to mathematical and metaphysical heads, but the æsthetical element of which happily lies on the surface. God, he says, had to constitute the system of things from the two original and most necessary elements, EARTH and FIRE, by which tangibility and visibility are made possible. But 'two things cannot be well or beautifully put together without a third, which shall make a bond betwixt the two; and the best of all bonds is that which, as much as possible, establishes a unity between the two extremes, and this is naturally done only by PROPORTION.' This

¹ This must be noted carefully; for Plato, though he holds the world to be good, and very good, and in its general type and tendency perfect, nowhere denies the actual existence of what is evil and ugly in individual cases, proceeding from certain disturbing causes.

principle of proportion, therefore, the god (*ὁ θεός*) introduced into the constituent elements of the world, by combining FIRE and AIR with EARTH and WATER, in such a manner, as that fire should bear the same proportion to air that air does to water, and air again should bear the same proportion to water that water does to earth. I have already said that mathematical difficulties connected with the geometry of solids, arise out of the manner in which this statement is made in the original;¹ but of its deep æsthetical significancy there can be no doubt. Here Plato has, in fact, asserted that the elements of symmetry and proportion, which are the substratum of all beauty of form, exist in the very seed of things; do, in fact, by their indwelling presence, render a beautifully-harmonised existence possible, just as a particular conformation of one kind of seed in the vegetable world renders the evolution of a rose possible and necessary, while another sort of conformation in another kind of seed as necessarily sends forth a lily. Now there can be no doubt as to the fact, that however modern chemistry has got beyond the crude philosophy of the four elements, it is so far from having disowned the principle of inherent proportions by which Pythagoras and Plato believed these elements to be bound together, that it has rather brought out with most striking evidence the fact, that without duly weighed and justly balanced proportions, capable of the most exact mathematical calculation, no combinations take place of a strictly constituent kind; that

¹ On these, and on the subsequent passage about the beautiful triangles, the student will consult *Études sur le Timée de Platon*, par MARTIN. 2 tom. 8vo. Paris, 1841.

is, such as affect the essential qualities of the compound elements of the material world. Here, therefore, we have a most convincing proof how an ideal philosopher, proceeding from the instinct of the Beautiful divinely implanted in his noble soul, can feel out for himself the laws of the same eternal Beauty, as they exist stereotyped in the divine organism of the Universe. Nor is this strange, but rather just the very thing that was to be looked for. Genius discovers truth, just because they are both divine, and find one another naturally by mystic sympathy. In this sense the Real and the Ideal are one ; and if so, it can never be that minute peeping intellects, with mere microscopes and knives, should discover the great laws and eternal proportions of this beautiful whole ; but only large minds that are inspired with God-given enthusiasm for Beauty will be able to recognise its laws in the physical world, of which it is the mould. And, accordingly, we find that one of the first hints of the doctrine of morphology, fertile in such comprehensive consequences, both in botany and in anatomy, was given by a great modern, who, like Plato, united the faculty of serene delight in the Ideal with the capacity of accurate scrutiny of the Real. It was GOETHE who discovered the law of metamorphosis in the organs of plants,¹—in other words, the great æsthetic law of nature, by which *multiplicity is evolved from unity by a transformative agency acting according to a law of likeness and variety*. And not only so ; but since the impulse given by the great German poet-thinker, the whole subject of beauty in the vegetable

¹ See LEWIS' Life of Goethe ; particularly good on the great poet's scientific labours, and in all respects a most satisfactory performance.

world has attracted the special attention of naturalists ; and mathematical calculations of the most curious and minute kind have been made, proving from the whole conformation of the vegetable world, and the laws of growth in plants, that Pythagoras saw deepest of all physico-theologians when he said that the principle of all things is NUMBER ; and that Plato saw no less clearly in the *Timæus* when he wrote, that there can be no such thing as a well-constituted creation, the work of a wise and good being, without PROPORTION.¹ In the animal kingdom also, I was informed by Professor GOODSIR, researches of the same kind have been made;² so that from all quarters the men who observe facts seem eager to own their natural allegiance to the men who expound principles. A Baconian no longer looks on a Platonist as his enemy ; the Realism of the nineteenth century after Christ shakes hands with

¹ On the symmetrical beauty of the vegetable world I have to thank Professor BALFOUR for the following references, which the student may find useful :—

(1.) ST HILAIRE : *Leçons de Botanique. comprenant principalement la morphologie végétale.* Paris, 1840. C. xxxi.

(2.) *Mémoires sur la disposition géométrique des feuilles et des inflorescences, par Martins et Bravais.* Paris, 1838.

(3.) Henslow's *Principles of Botany*, p. 123.

(4.) Various papers in the *Annales des Sciences Naturelles.* 2d and 3d series.

(5.) NAUMANN in *Poggendorff's Annalen* for 1842.

² I am referred by Professor Goodsir specially to—(1.) MOSELEY on the *Shell of the Nautilus*, in *Philosophical Transactions*, about fourteen years ago. (2.) Dr W. ADAM on the *Symmetry of the Skeleton of the Camel*, in *Linnæan Transactions*, about the same time. When naming these books, Professor GOODSIR mentioned to me, that the law of beautiful proportion in animals is a law of geometrical proportion. I have not had time personally to investigate the subject.

the Idealism of the fifth century before Christ; and clever men no longer call that science the most true which is the farthest removed from the Author of all truth.

I pass over the famous passage on the harmonic ratios of the cosmical $\psi\upsilon\chi\lambda$, which next follows in the dialogue, involving, as it does, perplexed and curious questions of acoustic science; remarking only, as in the former case, that the scientific difficulties of detail in this passage do not in the least affect its æsthetical significance. As the material elements of the world are bound together by apt proportions, so the soul of the world, Plato taught, energises by innate harmonies; and that is the reason why human beings, in whom a kindred soul dwells, find such harmonies, even without seeking them, in whatever environment they may be placed. Neither is there anything that need detain us, in the detailed account of the creation of the planets, of animals, and specially of man. I pass on, therefore, to the much-bespoken passage concerning the beauty of mathematical areas.

The element of form, or visual proportion, was so strong in Plato's mind, that he could not conceive of the atoms of the primordial elements existing otherwise than in certain fixed shapes appropriate to the nature of each element. For this reason, according to an obvious enough fancy, he gives to the atom of earth a cubical shape, to the fire-atom a pyramidal, and so forth. Now it is in developing this notion that the philosopher brings out his ideas with regard to the relative beauty of certain mathematical forms; and what he says is as follows:—All regular solid figures are contained by superficial surfaces, which (except

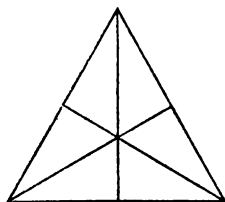
in the case of spheres and other curved figures) must always be certain regular figures bounded by straight lines. Now the simplest component element of all plane rectilinear figures is the triangle; out of which, as the tyro in mathematical science knows, every possible sort of rectilinear figure may be built up. We start, therefore, with the triangle; and amongst all possible triangles, select those, which are at once most beautiful in themselves, and most capable of producing new beautiful figures by juxtaposition, according to certain fixed laws. Of these the two most perfect are both right-angled; the one being the right-angled isosceles triangle,



which, of course, has the two angles at the base equal each to half a right angle; and the other, the right-angled scalene, of which the sides may be of every possible relative size, and the acute angles, following the ratio of the sides, of every possible ratio, between zero and infinity. Now the proportions of the angles of the right-angled isosceles triangle being fixed by a permanent relation of the most perfect kind—the ratio of 2 to 1—always present one unvarying type of great beauty; but the right-angled scalene triangle has as such no definite proportions, and therefore no necessary general type of beauty. But it may, of course, be constructed according to ratios; and of these the most beautiful has been proved to be that in which the hypotenuse is double the length of the shortest side, and in which the angles bear the proportion of 1, 2, 3.



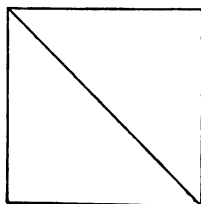
He then goes on to show the very remarkable properties of which this triangle is possessed. For, if six of these figures be joined together, back to back, in such a way that their hypotenuses and their shortest sides unite in a common centre, one of the most beautiful of mathematical figures, the equilateral triangle, is necessarily the result.¹



Again, four of these equilateral triangles placed together, so as that three of them meet at every point to form a solid angle, form a well-known beautiful figure, the TETRAHEDRON, that is, a pyramid whose base and whose three sides are formed of equilateral triangles equal to one another. A pyramid of this kind, therefore, is contained by superficial surfaces, that may be resolved into four-and-twenty right-angled scalene triangles of the proportions given; each of the equilateral triangles containing six. The next figure produced from these elements is the regular OCTAHEDRON,

¹ See this mathematically proved in *Martin's Book*, vol. ii., p. 237.

of which all the faces are equilateral triangles, and of which the solid angles, in number six, are equal, and compounded each of four equal plane angles. This can be resolved into forty-eight scalene elements. The third product of the same elements is the regular ICOSAHEDRON, composed of twenty equilateral triangles which form twelve solid angles, each composed of five plane angles. This, again, is resolved into one hundred and twenty scalene triangles. The process of the formation of beautiful solid figures with the right-angled scalene triangle being thus exhausted, Plato has to perform the same process with the isosceles triangle. But this is soon done; as the only product of the right-angled isosceles triangle is the cube formed by six square surfaces, of which each is composed of two isosceles right-angled triangles.



On the basis of this statement, which, after the exposition of Martin, any tyro in mathematical learning may understand with perfect clearness, I proceed to make some necessary remarks on the beauty of geometrical figures generally, and on the views propounded on this subject by some recent æsthetical writers, particularly Dr M'VICAR and Mr HAY; premising only, with respect to Plato, that as the *Timæus* is a cosmological, not an æsthetical treatise, his remarks on the beauty of certain triangular forms as elements of the

atomic composition of the cosmos, cannot, as a matter of course, be transferred to the same forms viewed as frameworks of visual symmetry in the practice of the Fine Arts.

On what does the beauty of mathematical areas depend? Necessarily on two elements, both of which have been largely illustrated in these discourses: on PROPORTION and on EXPRESSION. The classification given in Dr M'Vicar's work is unhappy in this respect; for it withholds the quality of expressiveness altogether from geometrical figures; which one may easily see is a great mistake. For all square and rectangular figures, by their very nature, express stability; the triangular form expresses ascent and aspiration; and, as nothing which is heavy can rise, it expresses also lightness. Circular forms, again, express gentleness and grace; and more curious curves express, as we have sufficiently shown above, self-command and dexterity. An absolutely most beautiful figure, therefore, that is to say, a figure always and everywhere most beautiful, independently of relation and expression, cannot exist; because every figure must express something, and that figure which most perfectly expresses one idea would be altogether unsuitable for the expression of an idea exactly the reverse. When, therefore, Plato, in a previous passage of this discourse (33 B) which has become almost proverbial, says, that God determined to make the world of a spherical figure, having all the parts equally distant from the centre, because 'of all figures the sphere is the most perfect and most like to itself; similitude of parts being in every case infinitely more beautiful than dissimilitude' (*νομίσας μωρίῳ κάλλιον ὁμοίον*

ἀνομοίου); he lays down a proposition which, in such an unqualified way, can in nowise be allowed. A sphere will only then be the most perfect figure, when perfect ease of motion in every direction, with perfect ease of balance on any point, is the idea meant to be expressed; for absolute equality of parts, though it be no doubt a great beauty, can never be obtained without a certain monotony, and the sacrifice of that variety so necessary to relieve the eye and to exercise the imagination. In this respect an ellipse, or an oblate spheroid like an orange, will appear a more beautiful figure than a perfect sphere. In the same way, with regard to rectilineal figures, it were easy to say that the square and the equilateral triangle, by virtue of the perfect equality of all their parts, are more beautiful than any other sort of rectangles, rhomboids, or triangles of whatever ratio. But every one sees that beauty can never exist in mere form, independently of the meaning and significance of that form in the particular case where it is exhibited; therefore, unless absolute balance of parts be the main object or the necessary condition of the form exhibited, absolute equality of ratio will bring no delight to the spectator. Whatever be the virtues of the equilateral triangle, for instance, there is one thing which it certainly never can achieve: it can never express elevation (for its height never can be equal to its base); and elevation, as is well known, is one of the main elements of power in architecture, and generates the feeling of the sublime. For the same reason, a square tower, raised to whatever height, will never communicate the same sensation of awe, as a rectangular tower on a small base raised to the same height. But this is not all.

In the Fine Arts, considered as a grand organic machinery for exciting ideas of the beautiful in the beholders, under the greatest possible variety of concrete circumstance, expression is not the only thing to be considered. Congruity, contrast, variety, and, to a certain extent, novelty, and even accidental association, must constantly be kept in view. To maintain, therefore, as a matter of practice, that any definite ratio of lines and angles is absolutely more beautiful than all others, is to enslave creative talent to a merely intellectual formula, and to make the heaven-born instinct of men of genius a useless gift. Proportion, no doubt, there must always be, and congruities; but they cannot always be such as are measurable by a pair of compasses. It is the very divine prerogative of genius, with a most subtle accuracy, to use proportionate quantities according to ratios which no mechanical instrument can appreciate.

These are the reasons which prevent me from giving a complete assent to what Dr M'Vicar has so eloquently written about the beautiful effects of Plato's scalene triangle in sculpture and the sister arts. No doubt this triangle has that in its very constitution, which makes it convenient as a frame to contain all works of art, in which a just medium between length and breadth is required, and where the frame must necessarily be triangular. And it is equally plain that a triangular frame of this description is presented by the human figure, when either a man, standing erect, stretches forth his arm horizontally, or lying on the ground, reclines on the right arm perpendicularly placed, as in the famous statue of the Dying Gladiator.

But it is no less true, that the sovereign power of expression and truth to ever-varying nature, will constantly interfere to prevent the perfect realisation of any such merely formal frame-work. One sort of rectangle may be suited for a common picture or a calling-card, and it may be a rectangle of which, according to certain mathematical proportions based on Plato's scalene, Dr M'Vicar's mathematical intellect particularly approves; but George Harvey's 'Curlers,' if it be true to nature, and to the very idea of the game which it represents, will demand a rectangle much more elongated. And so of all other figures. Isocles triangles of all different proportions may be made, and they may all be beautiful in their place, according to the story which they are meant to tell, and the company which they are forced to keep.

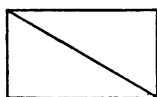
Of course, in these observations it is only intended to vindicate the native freedom of art from the tyranny of a pedantic or fanciful geometry. That a reference to mathematical ratios, both of space and time, must necessarily enter into the elements of a ripe æsthetical judgment, seems sufficiently plain. That the ancients paid remarkable attention to this matter, is witnessed both by actual measurement made of their existing works, and by the express testimony of their literary historians. Pamphilus, the Macedonian, as we are informed by Pliny, was particularly remarkable for the intelligent zeal with which he applied mathematical and arithmetical relations to the art of painting.¹ We may say, therefore, that, though every creative mind possesses a certain imperial power, to which the compasses

¹ 'Pamphilus Macedo primus in pictura omnibus literis eruditus præcipue Arithmetice et Geometrice, sine quibus negabat artem perfici

of the mathematician dare not dictate, the thoroughly accomplished artist will in no case disregard altogether the merely formal consideration of mathematical framework. We may say also, that in certain subordinate and purely decorative departments of art, where the amusement of the eye is the principal object sought to be attained, it may easily be proved, on the principles laid down in the preceding discourses, that certain geometrical figures are much more beautiful than others, while some fall to be rejected as absolutely and inherently ugly. If it be asked, for instance, what sort of a rectangle is the most beautiful, I should not hesitate a moment with the answer, that though I could not tell this absolutely, and without reference to the congruities of some special case, I could tell absolutely what is the most ugly and on all occasions inadmissible. The nearest figure to which a rectangle bears affinity is a square. I should say, therefore, according to the principles laid down above (p. 74), that the first condition of a beautiful rectangle, is that its proportions should be such as distinctly and decidedly to mark it out as a characteristic mathematical entity from that other figure, a square, with which it is most readily confounded. The ugliest rectangle, therefore, is that which so indistinctly wavers on the boundary line of the perfect square, as not to impress the eye fully with what it intends to be. On the other hand, the long sides of a rectangle may evidently be so prolonged as that the eye loses the impression of a four-sided figure containing a space, and

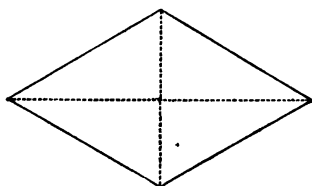
posse.—Nat. Hist. xxxv. 10. Conf. QUINCTIL. xii. 10, where it is said that he and Melanthius excelled all other painters, '*ratione*,' that is, in *proportion*.

is overwhelmed by the conception of the parallel straight lines, which are only the boundaries of the area. Such a parallelogram also is very bad. But any rectangle may be good, according to circumstances, which does not run into either of these extremes ; and there is no doubt that the rectangle, of which the diameter is the common hypotenuse of two of Plato's scalene triangles (which Dr M'Vicar praises),



is a rectangle of very fair proportions.

How scientifically certain some of the principles of beauty in geometrical forms are, may be shown further by the example of the lozenge.



On the beauties of this figure, and its extensive application in the decorative departments of art, the ingenious writer whom I have just named, enlarges with manifest predilection ; and he seems to indicate that its beauty arises from its being composed of four of Plato's scalene triangles joined together in the manner indicated by the dotted lines in the figure. But this I can admit to be a principle of beauty in the lozenge only in so far as, by the proportion of the acute angles, it presents a sort of just medium between the too much

and the too little, which is the common principle of just art, as of good manners. Lozenges varying considerably from these proportions might undoubtedly be introduced with good effect, according as the congruities of each special case might require. But of the lozenge, taken generally, the beauty plainly depends on the following principles : (1.) On its mere novelty ; for in architecture the square and rectangle, as expressive of stability, are necessarily more common, and in the severe style almost universal. (2.) On its position ; for if it were placed on either base, it would give the feeling of a falling square, than which nothing could offend the eye more grossly ; but being placed upon its axis, this excites the impression of a perfectly cunning poise and balance, like to the posture of a person standing on tip-toe. (3.) On its variety ; for mere equality, as we before observed, necessarily carries with it a certain monotony ; and for the same reason that the oblate spheroid gives an impression of beauty beyond the power of Plato's perfect sphere, so a rectangle, in point of variety, is more beautiful than a square, and a lozenge is more beautiful than a rectangle. The eye is delighted in this figure, at once with the relation of equality in each pair of opposite angles, and of contrast between the acute and obtuse angles. But this is not all ; for (4.) if there is a variety in the individual lozenge, to which the most beautiful rectangle can lay no claim, a trellis, wicket-work, or other interlaced surface of lozenges, is yet more various and more beautiful. For, whereas in a series of conjoined rectangles (as in the shelves of a library) the bounding lines are a set of parallels, along which the eye runs, receiving nothing but the repeated im-

pression of the most common of all lines, the horizontal, in such a manner also, necessarily, as to separate each row completely to the fancy from that which is immediately below it, and thus damage the conception of a complex totality; in the case of a reticulation of lozenges, the bounding lines continually crossing one another in various directions, feed the eye with a complex exhibition of very curious entertainment.

I shall conclude these observations with a few remarks on the very ingenious theory of symmetrical proportions in form, lately advanced and pressed on public attention in a series of elaborate works by Mr D. R. Hay, of this city. As my knowledge both of mathematics and of music is of a very elementary kind, I cannot be expected to give an authoritative opinion with regard to a matter which goes into the minute analogies of both; but, on the other hand, it is no doubt equally plain, that a writer who assumes, as Mr Hay does in all his books, that the only *scientific* element of beauty is the mathematically measurable, can as little be looked on as paying an impartial regard to all the elements which must enter into a complex æsthetical judgment. For an authoritative verdict on the very curious questions raised by Mr Hay, the public has yet to wait for the appearance of a person who shall be at once poet and philosopher, musician and geometer.

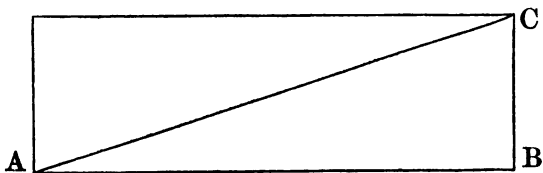
The characteristic, and indeed, so far as I can see, the only absolutely novel point¹ in Mr Hay's 'Science of

¹ In so far as Mr Hay stands forward as an advocate of the old doctrine of mathematical ratios in beauty, taught by Pythagoras, Plato, Aristotle, and all the venerable hierarchy of the world's greatest thinkers, I need not say that I entirely agree with him, and

Beauty,' is that the definite ratios and known proportions, which in the vibrations of a musical string produce harmony to the ear, if transferred to the eye, will produce the feeling of a pleasing proportion in that sense; specially, that if musical strings whose length is in the ratio of 1, $\frac{1}{3}$, $\frac{1}{5}$, $\frac{1}{2}$, produce by their vibrations fixed harmonies in the ear, the same relations, applied to visual spaces, will produce corresponding æsthetic pleasure to the eye. Now, there can be no doubt that this theory proceeds on a presumption in favour of which a profound thinker of the Pythagorean or Platonic school would have much to urge; and, for myself, I may say honestly, that I am prepossessed in favour of its truth, and believe it to be true in a certain sense; but I have great difficulties about the special way in which Mr Hay makes the transference from the regulating laws of one sense to those of the other. It is unquestionably true, for instance, that if I take any mathematical area, say a rectangle, and divide it into two equal halves, the eye finds a certain pleasure in the equality of that division; and, arguing from an acoustic analogy, an æsthetical philosopher, ambitious of a new terminology, might say that by the equal division I had found the visual octave of the rectangle. In the same way, architectural fronts, divided into three or five equal parts, might be said to possess beauty according to the visual harmony of a third and a fifth. But this is not Mr Hay's meaning; and no doubt he would scout

that his merit in thus sturdily planting himself on the solid ground of calculable science, to do battle against the glittering nebulosities of the association-sophists, is of a kind too well known, and too generally admitted, to require any special recognition from me.

such an obvious idea of comparing visual spaces with musical intervals, as altogether shallow and unsatisfactory. Mr Hay's theory is—taking his chapter on the Parthenon as the most obvious application of his doctrine—that modern architects are altogether wrong in measuring the proportions of an edifice meant to be beautiful by lengths and breadths; for that the true proportions are ascertainable, and the Greeks did actually ascertain them, by the measurement of angles bearing to one another the same ratios as the harmonious divisions of the monochord. Thus, in the façade of the Parthenon, the lower part of which we shall suppose to be represented by the annexed rectangle; while, according to common notions, the proportion of the height of the façade CB, to its length



AB, is determined by certain congruities of length and breadth, depending, indeed, on certain ultimate principles, but liable to great variation in each special case, Mr Hay asserts that the ratio of the angle CAB is the only one which affords a scientific result, and that this ratio must in every case be one of the well-known and most concordant musical ratios. The beauty of the colonnade, therefore, according to Mr Hay, in this famous temple, depends on the fact, that the angle CAB bears the same relation to a right angle that the musical ratio of $\frac{1}{2}$ bears to the funda-

mental note 1. This fact, he says, he has ascertained by exact measurement ; and he believes that Ictinus, the architect employed by Pericles to raise this wonderful monument, acted consciously on this acoustic analogy, as it had been handed down to Athens from Pythagoras, and learned by him from Egyptian hierophants in Heliopolis, or Indian gymnosophists on the Ganges. Now, my difficulty in this matter lies here. Mr Hay, starting with the assertion that the eye measures, or, when it acts scientifically in architecture, *ought* to measure by angles, and not by vertical and horizontal lines enclosing rectangular spaces, assumes that a right angle answers to the fundamental note of a musical scale, that is, 1 in music, and of course the angles at the base of a rectangular isosceles triangle, each being half the vertical angle, are the octaves of a right angle. But what authority, I should like to know, in a purely æsthetical question, have we for dividing rectangular spaces into triangles at all ? Mathematicians, no doubt, commence with triangles as the simplest figure, and by the necessary qualities of this figure, the most curious laws of form in the case of rectangles, circles, and other figures, are brought out. But the eye of an artist judges by the natural contour of a figure, looks upon a rectangle as a rectangle, and considers only the proportions of its length and breadth to one another and to the whole. Again, the fundamental note in music has a most decided likeness to its octave ; but what likeness has a right angle, 90° , to an acute angle of 45° , or to any acute angle ? To me it appears that a right angle, and every acute angle, are things of an essentially different kind, and admit of no comparison. I can see a likeness

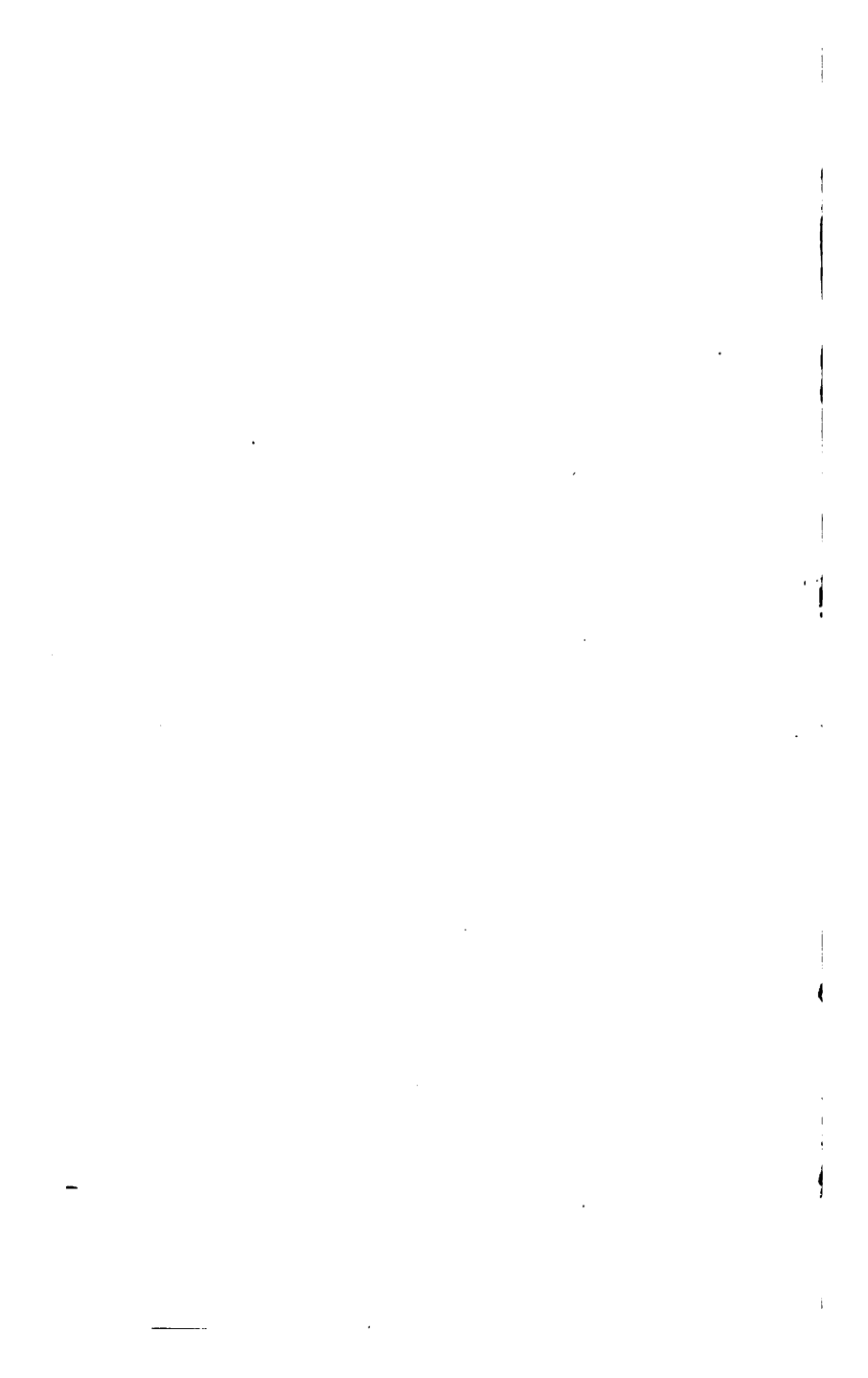
of a certain kind between a circle and a square, and, again, between a rectangle and an ellipse; I can understand how the one should be viewed as a modification of the other, so far as certain rectangular figures may be said to represent certain curvilinear figures; but I absolutely do not know what is meant when it is said that the angle BAC, in the prefixed diagram, is the octave of the angle ABC. The feeling of consonance, or rather of modified identity, which belongs to the octave of a musical note with its fundamental note, does not strike my eye when the harmonic ratios of music are applied to the measurement of a rectangular colonnade cut up into triangles.

I have yet another remark to make. As the comparative heights of the columns of the Parthenon, of the entablature, and of the pediment (if they were not determined according to Mr Hay's plan), were no doubt determined by the architect according to certain definite and well-calculated ratios of the parts; and as, the base remaining the same and the right angle at B, the size of the angle at A could be affected by no other circumstance than by the measurements of the line CB, may it not be the case that the divisions of the line CB were such as necessarily to produce ratios of $\frac{1}{2}$, $\frac{1}{3}$, etc., in the confronting angles at A, without any reference to musical ratios at all? This, of course, is a matter for mathematicians to determine.¹

¹ Since writing the above remarks, I have read 'The Principles of Beauty, by Dr JOHN SYMONDS. London, 1857.' The author is an enthusiastic disciple of Mr Hay; but the work contains nothing that tends in the slightest degree to remove the difficulties with respect to that gentleman's theory, which I have so fully stated in the text.

Such are the most important notices of the æsthetical doctrines of Plato, viewed in their connection with modern speculation, so far as I have been able to digest them. If they shall in any degree awaken in the thinking men of this country a more living consciousness of their filial relationship to the great master-architect of all ideal philosophy, they will have served the principal purpose that was intended in their publication.¹

¹ In reference to the mathematical ratios of Beauty in Nature and Art, there is a curious work by Dr ZEISING, a German, to which my attention has been directed by PROFESSOR KELLAND, of this University, too late, however, to admit of my going minutely into the theory which it advocates. The work bears the title, '*Neue Lehre von den Proportionen des menschlichen Körpers, aus einem bisher unerkannt gebliebenen, die ganze Natur und Kunst durchdringenden morphologischen Grundgesetze entwickelt und mit einer vollständigen historischen Uebersicht der bisherigen Systeme begleitet.*' By Proféssor Dr A. ZEISING. Leipzing, 1854. The fundamental law thus enunciated, according to the account given to me by Professor Kelland, and published by him in the *Edinburgh Philosophical Journal* for 1856, is that a line is then most beautifully divided when the whole is to the larger division as the larger division is to the lesser. Of the beauty of such a division, in certain cases, I can have no doubt; but if it be meant, in the regular German style, to override the whole of nature and art despotically with this one formula, against such a dogmatism the constitution of my whole nature forces me to rebel, and I can only shake my head *a priori*, and say, —INCREDULUS ODI!



APPENDIX.

NOTE, Page 35.

I have placed the element of ORDER or REGULARITY (Symmetry and Rhythm) first among the principles of Beauty, because it is at once the most simple in its nature, the most universal in its application, and admits of being deduced with the most indisputable certainty from the very nature of mind. I shall here set down a few of the opinions of other writers on this point, that it may be seen in how far they agree, or disagree, with the argument stated in the text.

SIR CHRISTOPHER WREN.

‘There are natural causes of beauty. Beauty is a harmony of objects, begetting pleasure by the eye. There are two causes of beauty, natural and customary. Natural is from *Geometry*, consisting in uniformity (that is, equality) and proportion. Customary beauty is begotten by the use of our senses to those objects which are usually pleasing to us for other causes, as familiarity or particular inclination breeds a love to things not in themselves lovely. Here lies the great occasion of errors; here is tried the architect’s judgment: but always the true test is natural or geometrical beauty.’

This is spoken like an architect, a man of business, and a man of sense. There is no subtle twaddle about association here. The practical man in this department of the Fine Arts, is forced, by the whole habit of his profession, to feel that order or symmetry—that is, measured, calculable, geometrical beauty—is the one only foundation on which æsthetical science can rest. The same phenomenon appears at the present hour. While the stragglers of the once

unbroken phalanx that used to swear by the *Edinburgh Review* are perusing, with undiminished satisfaction, Jeffrey's sceptical article, reprinted in the new edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, a practical architect in the same city has just given to the world a very ingenious demonstration of the geometrical basis of beauty.¹ Superficial literary men, and expert talkers of every kind, are the natural victims of a merely negative criticism and a barren subtlety in every age.

TWINING. (Philosophy of Painting. London, 1849.)

'Regularity and symmetry are abundant sources of pleasure, because these qualities *express intention or design* more immediately and more distinctly than any others.'—P. 100.

This is not my principle in words, but it is implied in my principle. For whence can intention or design proceed, if not from an intending and designing mind? My objection to Mr Twining's method of expression is, that he unnecessarily narrows the field of a broad principle, and that in such a way as to make it lie very close to a purely utilitarian conception. Witness his own words previously, p. 29 :—

'The prevalence and importance of regularity and symmetry are doubtless to be ascribed almost entirely to the circumstance that our *wants and conveniences are best supplied*, either directly or indirectly, *by forms based on these principles*; and the HABIT OF ASSO- CIATING the forms of objects with the purposes which they best fulfil, induces by degrees the conviction that these forms are in themselves the best, and that they are the marks of design.'

This is a very low philosophy of symmetry, even with respect to pots and pans: it certainly can have no reference whatever to the symmetry of the sides of a crystal, or the segments of a corolla.

REID.

'If we consider the beauty of form or figure in inanimate objects, this, according to Dr Hutcheson, results from regularity mixed with variety. Here, it ought to be observed, that regularity in all cases *expresses design and art*; for nothing regular was ever the work of chance; and where regularity is joined with variety, it expresses design more thoroughly. Besides, it has been justly observed, that regular figures are more easily and perfectly comprehended by the mind than irregular ones, of which we can never form an adequate conception.'—*Essay* viii., c. 4, of *Beauty*.

¹ Mr Cousin, Architect for the City of Edinburgh, in *The Builder* for April 1857.

That regularity expresses design and art, and that a regular object is more easily grasped by the intellect, I agree; and this implies that the love of regularity is dependent on the essential laws of mental existence; but what I maintain is, that the mere contemplation of symmetry pleases the mind without any consideration of its being the product of design and art. This is an after-thought of philosophers.

BLAIR.

‘Nothing that belongs to human nature is more general than the relish of Beauty of one kind or other; of what is ORDERLY, PROPORTIONED, grand, harmonious. . . . It is no less essential to man to have some discernment of Beauty, than it is to possess the attributes of reason and speech.’ Again, ‘Taste is far from being an arbitrary principle, and which admits of no criterion whether it be false or true.’—*Lecture ii.*

HUTCHESON.

‘The figures which excite in us the idea of Beauty seem to be those in which there is *uniformity amidst variety*. What we call beautiful in objects, to speak in the mathematical style, seems to be in a compound ratio of such uniformity and variety; so that where the uniformity of bodies is equal, the beauty is as the variety, and where the variety is equal, the beauty is as the uniformity.’

* * * * *

‘It is perpetually to be observed, that children are fond of all regular figures in their little diversions, although they be no more convenient or useful for them than the figures of our common pebbles; we see how early they discover a taste or sense of beauty in desiring to see buildings, regular gardens, or even representations of them, in pictures of any kind.’

With regard to this last observation, I should think it safer to say that the fondness of children for constructing regular figures with stones or other materials is clearly indicative of the action of mind generally, rather than that it indicates the presence of a sense of beauty, which, perhaps, is not generally developed till a more advanced period of life. In richly endowed children, however, there is no reason why the æsthetic enjoyment of visual beauty should not exist almost as early as the delight in musical sounds, and in poetical measure, which it is unquestioned that children experience at a very early age.

KAMES.

'Viewing any body as a whole, the beauty of its figure arises from regularity and simplicity; viewing the parts with relation to each other, uniformity, proportion, and order contribute to its beauty.'—*Elements of Criticism*. The author overrates the value of mere simplicity. This quality always pleases, because it does not confound by complexity of parts, and is free from the inadequacy that belongs to all hollow pretence and ostentation; but a composite object, if the parts are well mastered by a dominant idea, is more beautiful than a simple object, in proportion as the problem which it realises is more difficult. Again he says,

'With respect to the external senses, brutes generally yield not to man; and they may also have some obscure perception of beauty; but the more delicate sense of REGULARITY, ORDER, UNIFORMITY, and CONGRUITY, being connected with MORALITY and RELIGION, is reserved to dignify the chief of the terrestrial creation.' This passage shows that KAMES saw far deeper into the philosophy of taste than Lord Jeffrey; his language here approaching very nearly the real truth of the matter, that the great cosmical principle of ORDER stands on one and the same basis, whether as applied to religion or to the fine arts; and the man who does not recognize a divine beauty in the Universe, will not own—if he reasons consistently—a divine sanction in his conscience.

M'VICAR.

'Let us ask what are those general features of figure or form to which simple Beauty attaches. And do we require a long investigation? Has it not by a very general consent been admitted, that of this order of Beauty, *symmetry* is the principle? It may perhaps be said, that unity in variety is more generally quoted. But between the ideas expressed by these terms there is no difference. Unity in variety is merely a definition of symmetry (*Philosophy of Beautiful*, ch. iv.): more properly it is the genus, of which SYMMETRY is one species, and CONGRUITY (as I shall show in the next section) another.' Again, he says, in the same chapter, 'I will repeat at once, that with regard to surface *smoothness*, and with regard to structural regularity, *repetition* (at measured intervals he should have said), *radiation*, *equilibrium*, *balance of parts*, *simplicity of ratio*, all of which I comprehend under the simple term SYMMETRY, constitute the principle of composition by which the aspect of simple or mere Beauty is developed.' To this, though perfectly correct in the main, a nice criticism must make two objections: *First*, That the element

of SMOOTHNESS belongs altogether to a different category. *Second*, That the term SYMMETRY strictly applies only to the regular order of bodies in space, while some of the other terms used apply to that regularity of movement in time which is technically called RHYTHM.'

JEFFREY.

'Some of these theories (of which he gives a hasty review) seem necessarily to imply the existence of a peculiar sense or faculty for the perception of Beauty, as they resolve it into properties that are not in any way interesting or agreeable to any of our known faculties; such are those which make it consist in proportion, or in variety combined with regularity, or in waving lines, or in unity, or in the perception of relations, without explaining, or attempting to explain, why any of these objects should affect us with delight or emotion.' The literal interpretation of this extraordinary sentence is, that to our known faculties, disproportion, confusion, and chaos are equally interesting and agreeable with their contraries! There must have been some extraordinary defect in the man's mind who could seriously sit down to pen such absurdities. In the same article, he quotes with perfect approval, from Alison, six causes for the beauty of Greek architecture, of which symmetry is not one! And this great multitudes of persons in metaphysical Scotland were contented to receive, for a generation, as a very sound and a very profound philosophy! How willing are men sometimes to be deluded on certain subjects, and by certain instrumentalities! And when the hour is ripe for a lie, then the more complete it is the better. Sweep the floor clean; no matter whether you brush away dust or jewels! Men admire thorough work.

'Build a lie—yes, build a lie,
A large one—be not over tender;
Give it a form and raise it high,
That all the world may see its splendour.
Then launch it, like a mighty ship,
On the restless sea of men's opinion;
And the ship shall sail before the gale,
Endowed with motion and dominion!'

MACKAY.

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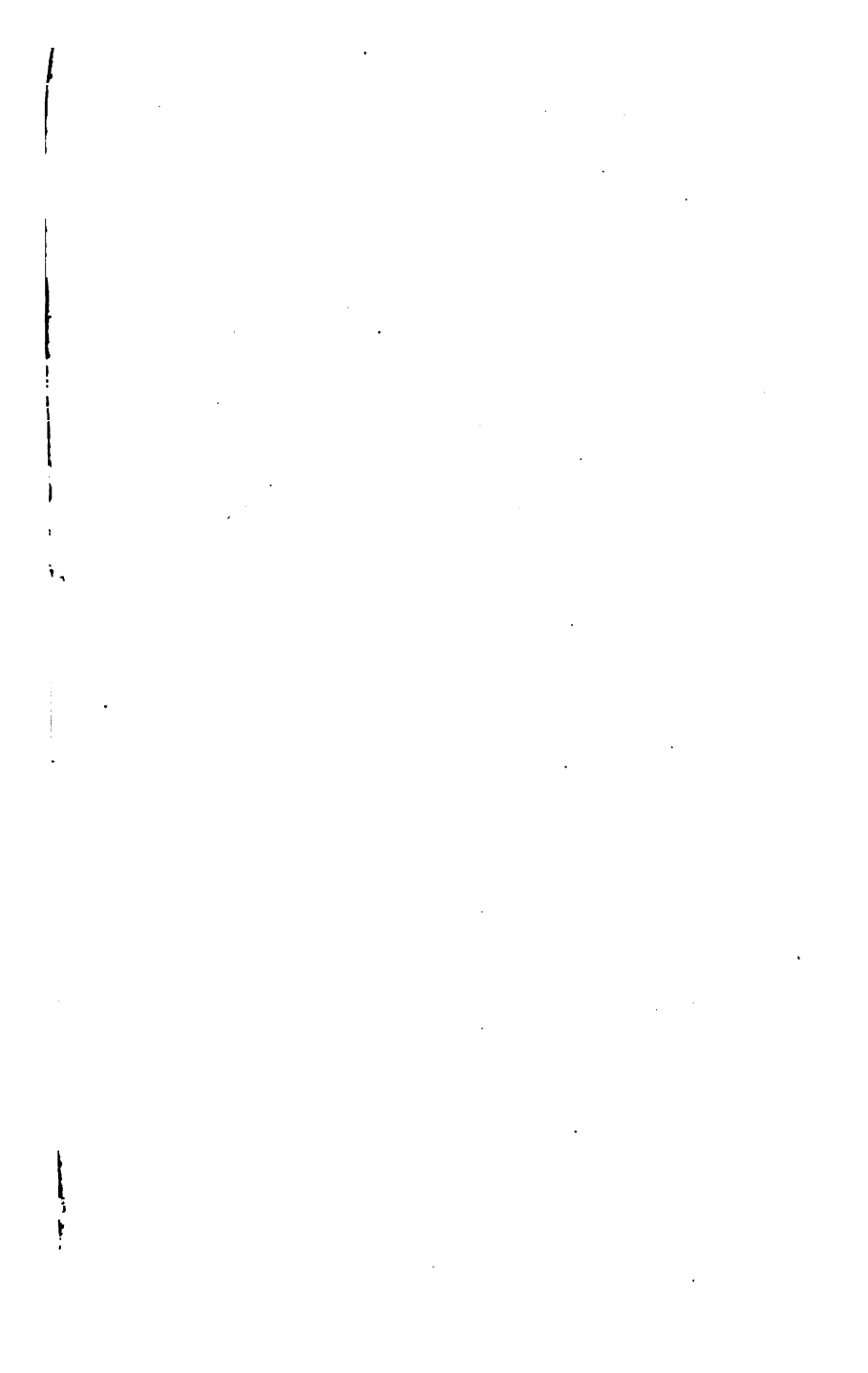
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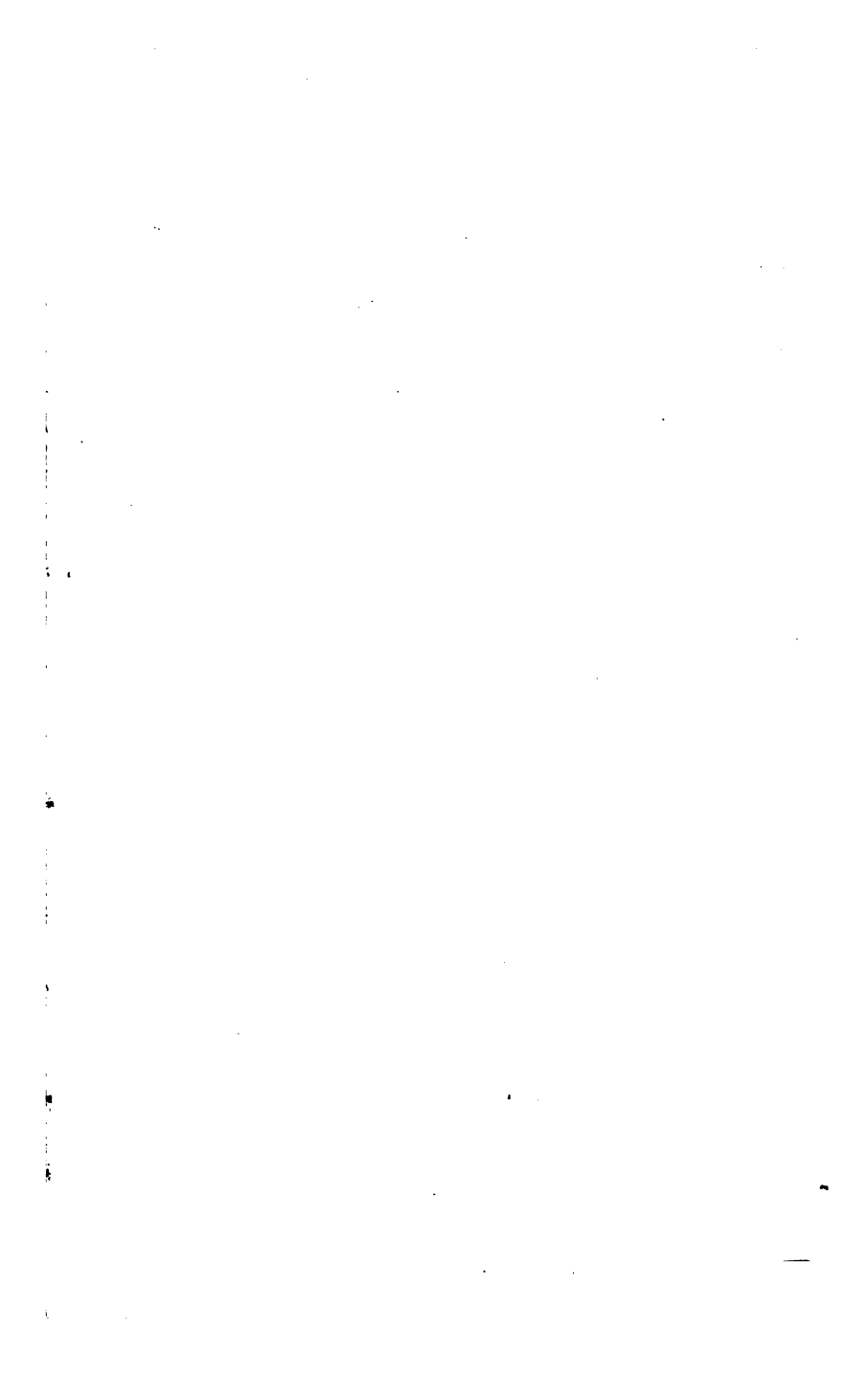
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